



# CONSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE





# Constitutional Practice

## SECOND EDITION



Rodney Brazier

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For Margot and Vicky

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# Introduction



TO-DAY THE EAST AND WEST MUST MEET. It frightens one to read in the morning papers that Wendell Willkie was in Chungking one Friday and back in America the following Monday, over the week-end, as it were. It was almost like magic. No matter what will be the type of world co-operation after the war, we are sure that the East and the West will be living closely together, and dependent on each other. Somehow after the breaking-up of the nineteenth-century political world, a new world must be forged out of the elements of Anglo-Saxon, Russian and Oriental cultures. The "Wisdom of China" is an effort to unravel some of the mysteries of the Oriental, and specifically the Chinese point of view—some of the basic ways of looking at things as revealed in native Chinese literature and philosophy.

When we come to Chinese civilization, the general impression is that it is a human, rationalistic, and easily understandable type of culture. The Chinese temper is, on the whole, humanistic, non-religious and non-mystical. That is true only to a certain extent. I agree entirely on its being humanistic; I disagree on its being non-mystical, for any culture which has a broad and deep spiritual basis must be in a sense mystical. If by "non-mystical" is meant the modern servile and shallow worship of mechanistic and materialistic facts, accurately observed and well-tabulated, seemingly sufficient unto themselves, which is the prevalent type of thinking to-day, then I must repudiate that Chinese civilization ever fell so low. The fact is, any branch of knowledge, whether it be the study of rocks and minerals, or the study of cosmic rays, strikes mysticism as soon as it reaches any depth. Witness Dr. Alexis Carrel and A. S. Eddington. The nineteenth-century shallow rationalism naïvely believed that the question "What is a blade of grass?" could be answered adequately by considering the blade of grass as a purely mechanical phenomenon. The contemporary scientific attitude is that it cannot. Since Walt Whitman asked that question with his profound mysticism, no one has been able to answer it and no scientist will presume to answer it to-day. And let us

remember, in that mysticism and distrust of the mechanistic view of the universe, Walt Whitman is Chinese. It is my conviction that the progress of contemporary science is forcing modern thought to develop in the direction of depth, and of a new synthesis of the mechanical and the spiritual, of matter and spirit.

In reviewing Chinese thought one is struck by the vast difference from the West both in style and method and in values and objectives. For what is the Chinese philosophy, and does China have a philosophy, say, like that of Descartes or Kant, a logically built and cogently reasoned philosophy of knowledge or of reality or of the universe? The answer is proudly "No." That is the whole point. So far as any systematic epistemology or metaphysics is concerned, China had to import it from India. The temperament for systematic philosophy simply wasn't there, and will not be there so long as the Chinese remain Chinese. They have too much sense for that. The sea of human life forever laps upon the shores of Chinese thought, and the arrogance and absurdities of the logician, the assumption that "I am exclusively right and you are exclusively wrong," are not Chinese faults, whatever other faults they may have. The very language of the Chinese philosophers is the market slang of the plebeians. China simply lacks the academic jargon which the American sociologists and psychologists love and which is so necessary for the construction of any air-tight academic theory. The fortress of academic aloofness from human life that Western scientists build around themselves by that jargon is one of the most amazing intellectual phenomena of the modern age. I notice that the scientists who popularize science and who write in the language that the common man can understand have a tendency to fall out of favour with the Royal Academies. In China, no college professor can call a "black-out" the "termination of illumination," and it is evident that we cannot build a systematic philosophy without this academic jargon. The Chinese scholar at once slips back into words like "black-out" and proverbs and analogies, like Emerson. The Chinese philosopher is like a swimmer who dives but must soon come up to the surface again; the Western philosopher is like a swimmer who dives into the water and is proud that he never comes up to the surface again and is happy in his profundity.

Generally, the reader will find reading Chinese philosophers like reading Emerson. Egon Friedell's characterization of Emerson's method and style may serve as a perfect description of all Chinese philosophers. "His propositions are there, unprepared, indisputable, like sailors' signals coming out of a misty deep." "He is an absolute Impressionist, in his style, his composition and his thought. He never propounds his ideas in a definite logical or artistic form, but always in a natural and often accidental

order which they have in his head. He knows only provisional opinions, momentary truths. He never sacrifices even a single word, sentence, or idea to the architecture of the whole. Things like 'order of content,' 'introduction,' 'transitions' do not exist for him. He begins to develop this or that view, and we think he is going to weave it systematically, elucidate it from all sides and entrench it against all possible attack. But then, suddenly, some alien picture or simile, epigram or *aperçu* strikes him, full in the middle of his chain of thought, and the theme thenceforward revolves on a quite new axis. He calls his essays, 'Considerations by the Way,' but everything that he wrote might equally be so entitled."

China's peculiar contribution to philosophy is therefore the distrust of systematic philosophy. I confess this must distress many college sophomores who are so anxious to have systems that have no loopholes in them and are strongly entrenched against all possible attacks. They want to be able to say, either that criminals are born and not made, or else that criminals are made and not born, and they want to *prove* it. The Chinese reply is that there is no such air-tight system on earth, and has never been any. Such systems do not exist except in the minds of the deluded, logical dunderheads.

Furthermore, the Chinese can ask a counter-question, "Does the West have a philosophy?" The answer is also clearly "No." We need a philosophy of living and we clearly haven't got it. The Western man has tons of philosophy written by French, German, English, and American professors, but still he hasn't got a philosophy when he wants it. In fact, he seldom wants it. There are professors of philosophy, but there are no philosophers. When one asks about contemporary philosophy in America, one thinks of Professor Whitehead. But what has the philosophy of Professor Whitehead got to do with the common man? The fact is, the vast scientific knowledge of the modern age is disintegrating and falling by its own weight, so that philosophy itself has become a branch of physics or biology or mathematics. And when one reads the heavy volume of papers read before the Conference of Science, Philosophy and Religion, trying to reunify modern knowledge, but comes upon such words as "objectives," "instrumentalities," and "procedures," and "determinant factors," and "processes," one has an instinctive distrust that science, philosophy and religion shall ever be reunited again.

Our international world is rapidly coming to the end of an era. So is our modern intellectual world. The world of ideas is definitely going to pieces, because our traditional values are gone. That brings us to the second difference between Oriental and Occidental philosophy; the difference in approach and values. It does look as if accurately observed

and carefully tabulated facts are all that we have to-day; our moral values have disappeared, and they have disappeared in a curious manner that I shall try to explain. There is a definite difference in approach between Chinese and Western philosophy, the approach of values and the approach of facts. This difference is curiously brought out by the contact of the East and the West. It strikes the Western tourists as curious that the Chinese have no sense of accuracy, particulars of facts and figures. It is hopeless to get two Chinese to agree on the mileage between two neighbouring towns or the population of either. And the Chinese equally cannot understand why a rough idea is not sufficient. On the other hand, it strikes the Chinese as equally curious that a Western writer cannot submit a magazine article and have it accepted without discoursing eloquently on the percentage of import of egg or butter into England, or the millimetres of Abyssinian cotton fibre, or a tabulation of so many million work-hours lost. A still more damning evidence is the popular assumption by politicians that a question like the second front could be settled by the "military" leaders who have "all the facts," and no sense of judgment whatsoever on moral, psychological and political issues. If the Chinese nation ever suffered from this statistical delusion, they would never have dared to take up arms against Japan's army. As showing the Chinese ignorance of facts, there was a Chinese scholar who wrote in all seriousness that the human heart was on the right side of the chest; his technique was execrable—he could not possibly have felt his heart with his own hand. On the other hand, the Chinese can come back and reply, "What difference does it make whether the heart is on the right or on the left? If you cut it up, you are bound to see it anyway, and if you don't cut it up, you can't do anything with it. Generally, you can't do anything with it, either, even if you do cut it up." The West will reply, "Ah yes, but we want to be scientific and exact and find out where the heart is." And the Chinese will reply again, "It doesn't matter where you find the heart is; it is much more important to place your heart in the right place." That represents briefly the difference between the approach of facts and the approach of values. H. G. Wells is suffering from the modern scientific Fact-Cult when he believes that we can reunify knowledge by his plan of a "world encyclopædia." He seems to think that the gathering and systematic presentation of data confer upon the scientist a Godlike wisdom, that facts are like cold figures, and the human mind is like an adding machine, and that if you put all the facts into the machine, you automatically draw out the correct, infallible answer and the world will then be saved. The folly of this conception is beyond belief. We are suffering not from lack of facts, but rather from too many and from lack of judgment.

Chinese humanism, or Confucianism, concentrates on certain human values. Until we realise the vastness of the difference of approach, it will be found disappointing by Western readers. Confucianism excludes both physics and metaphysics, and concentrates on the values of human relationships. There are not so many things that we can discover about human relationships, and it seems so little. But Confucianism says there is the knowledge of essentials and the knowledge of externals; the knowledge of externals is the world of facts, and the knowledge of essentials is the world of human relationships and human behaviour. Confucius says, Be a good son, a good brother and a good friend, and "if you have any energy left after attending to conduct, then study books." From the Confucian point of view, the little may be so much, and the much may be so little. For Chinese Humanism in its essence is the study of human relations (*jenlun*) through a correct appreciation of human values by the psychology of human motives to the end that we may behave as reasonable human beings (*tsuo jen*). That is all: but it may mean a great deal. The Confucian point of view is that politics must be subordinated to morals, that government is a makeshift of temporization, law a superficial instrument of order, and police force a foolish invention for morally immature individuals. "In presiding over law-suits, I am as good as anybody; the thing is so to aim that there shall be no law-suits," says Confucius. And morally mature individuals behaving with dignity and self-respect can be brought about only by education and culture and by a sense of moral order through the cultivation of rituals and music. The conception of the means of achieving social and political order is poles apart from that of Western economists and students of political science. "Guide the people with governmental measures and control or regulate them by the threat of punishment, and the people will try to keep out of gaol, but will have no sense of honour. Guide the people by morals and regulate them by *li* (the principle of social relationships), and the people will have a sense of honour and respect." At once an antipodal point is set up against the whole fabric of Western social and political philosophy. The Confucian final test for any civilization is whether it produces good sons, good brothers, good husbands, good friends and good individuals who have a delicate sensibility and are most anxious to avoid hurting others' feelings. Perhaps that may be the final end of civilization; perhaps not—how can we know? Perhaps to the people of the twenty-fifth century, our social behaviour as individuals and nations to-day may seem extremely uncouth. Perhaps some of the so-called world leaders to-day may seem to the man of the twenty-fifth century no more than barbarians with a tribalistic mind, as we to-day think of Hannibal. Meanwhile, the self-deception must continue.

But if we said to ourselves that the present disintegration of knowledge and collapse of values call for a restoration of certain human values, we would not know how to begin. The approach, the technique, the philosophical basis for the study of any kind of human values aren't there. So long as the mechanistic technique and materialistic method continue to dominate the thinking of our college professors, it is patent that such values cannot be rediscovered. And by "materialism" I do not mean the occupation with material progress, which is a popular charge against the Western world. I am all for material progress. I mean, rather, scientific materialism as a method and a technique and a point of view which has hopelessly paralysed the European humanities and thrown it into utter rout and confusion.

It would be interesting to study how the professors of the humanities started the rout from their moral fortress and fled in fear of any distinction of good and evil or even moral emotions of any kind, how they came to live in mortal terror of taking sides and trained their minds to see all things objectively as mechanical phenomena, to be analysed and explained and compared, how they ultimately came to be moral bats, disclaiming all judgments of morals and fearing moral platitudes like poison, and eventually had an abhorrence of the human free will and successfully eliminated conscience from their scholarship. The Dean of the Union Theological Seminary wrote an article in *Fortune*, telling of an incident which is typical and significant. He invited a scientific colleague to give a talk at the morning prayers to the students. The scientist declined on the ground that his realm was exact knowledge. Since questions of good and evil cannot in their nature be classified under exact knowledge and God himself shows very little possibility of being reduced to a mathematical formula, good and evil are out of bounds for the professor. What are we to do about a situation like this? Since God and Satan are eternal verities, in whatever sense you take it, but since there is no way of tackling the problems of good and evil by either percentages or statistical charts, the problem must remain unsolved and ignored.

It would be interesting to make a study of the invasion of the humanities by scientific materialism and of the betrayal of the humanities through the false instinct of their professors to ape the technique and paraphernalia of the natural sciences. There can be no conscience in the objective study of rocks and minerals or even of our animal friends, because the natural sciences call only for objectivity and an amoral academic attitude. When that scientific method is stolen and applied to the humanities, in the naïve belief that we are beginning to make the humanities true sciences, that amoral, objective method is carried over

with it. It happens, however, that disinterestedness which is a virtue in the natural sciences is, and must be, a crime in the human sciences. Humanities built upon this basis must be both untrue and inadequate on account of the different nature of the object and data of study. All human sciences are false sciences, and can be called sciences only in a figurative sense. I understand there are not only intelligence tests, dealing with highly subjective matter like "social consciousness" and "personal charm" and "masculinity" and "femininity" and "force of character," but there is in a certain institution even a machine which gives you the correct percentage of a man's intelligence by just slipping the person's answers into the machine. The machine does everything. This is no more than a hoodlum trick practised by the professors on the well-meaning endowers of the institution.

Owing to the rapid rise of prestige of the natural sciences, about the middle of the nineteenth century, all branches of human studies were beginning to call themselves "sciences." The words "organism," "natural law," "origins" and "evolution" were applied to literary and historical studies. Auguste Comte had started the fashion by calling his new sociology "social physics" and society "an organism." What does he mean when he says, "Society is an organism," no one will be able to make out. There was a veritable orgy of "fundamental laws" even in literary and social studies. Taine applied them to literary history, Marx applied them to economics, Zola applied them to the novel, and even Sainte-Beuve called his literary and biographical studies "the science of souls."<sup>1</sup> But there is no need to go back to history; there are plenty of modern instances. Dr. J. B. Watson one day made the astounding discovery of the possibility of studying the human mind without reference to thinking and feeling, and thought he was on the point of making psychology a true science by eliminating such medieval terms as "consciousness," "will," "emotion," "memory" and "perception" and confining it to the measurements of mechanical impulses and response. His inspiration clearly came from his study of animal psychology. And as a result of the century of development, one need only think of Theodore Dreiser's view of man as a chemical compound, a trapped animal moving in the gigantic chaos of blind chance, blind urges and drives and moral irresponsibility. We have come to the end of the road.

It can be proved that the world has gone to pieces as a direct result of scientific materialism invading our literature and thought. The professors of the humanities are reduced to the position of finding mechanistic laws

<sup>1</sup> Taine said in his Preface to the *History of English Literature*, "Virtue and vice are products like vitriol and sugar." Zola derived his inspiration for "the experimental novel" from Claude Bernard's *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* and started the autopsy school of literature, practically regarding human society as a morgue.



governing human activities, and the more rigorous the "natural laws" can be proved to be, and the more freedom of the will is proved to be a chimera, the greater is the professor's intellectual delight. Hence the economic interpretation of history, conceiving history as a determinist cage and man as a trapped biped animal moving in the direction of the supply of food. And Marx of course was proud of his "materialism" and his mechanistic view of history. For scientific materialism must spell determinism and determinism must spell despair. It is therefore not an accident that the most admired spirits of our times, not the greatest but the most in vogue, are pessimists. Our international chaos is founded upon our philosophic despair: the despair of Baudelaire, the despair of Huysmans, the despair of Hardy, the despair of Dreiser, the despair of T. S. Eliot, the eternal regret of Proust, the mild pessimism of Samuel Butler and Dean Inge and Aldous Huxley, and the violent despair of Picasso and the cubists and surrealists, Freudians, psychopaths and hyper-esthetes. Only a robust mind like that of Walt Whitman who was not afflicted with the scientific spirit and who was in close touch with life itself and with the great humanity could retain that enormous love and enormous faith in the common man. It is interesting to point out that the flowers of New England culture were so close to the Chinese: Whitman in his mysticism and his love for this flesh-and-blood humanity, Thoreau in his pacifism and his rural ideal, and Emerson in his insight and epigrammatic wisdom. That flower can blossom no more because the spirit of industrialism has crushed it.

But such pseudo-scientific naturalism in the humanities must for ever remain inadequate and pathetic, because of the discrepancy between method and material. The tracing of mother love to ovary secretions must, in the nature of human life, be inadequate, and is in fact one of the wickedest lies of such pseudo-science. Old mother rats do recover a spell of mother love when they get an injection of ovary secretions; human mothers, apart from the comparatively short period of nursing, must depend upon something else—the daily associations and perhaps common struggles in poverty and stores of memories and habits of speech or some incorrigible foibles that endear the mother to the son and the son to the mother. The mother-and-son relationship of rats does not have that period. And what about the father who hasn't got ovary glands? How does he come to love his children? Science must for ever abjure the possibility of ever demonstrating that the father has any special secretions of any kind, when his wife conceives or has given birth to a baby. In the same way, our value of love between man and woman has been destroyed by this kind of science, which began by confusing love with sex and ended by interpreting love only in terms of sex. Love has

been dethroned from its pedestal. For this we have the Freudians to thank:

No more privacy  
Of mind and body; these students of mental history  
Have stripped the fig-leaves, dispelled all mystery,  
Have sent the naked, shivering soul to the scullery,  
And turned the toilet into a public gallery;  
They've dulled the glamour of love, soured the wine of romance,  
Plucked the feathers of pride, exposed to naked glance  
The Inner Sanctum of sovereign mind, dethroned from its dais,  
And crowned the rank-smelling Libido in its place.

Our conception of the nature of man has been falsified, debased. The bottom has been knocked out of our human universe; the structure cannot hold; something must break. Out of the shattered fragments of modern knowledge a new world must be built, and the East and West must build it together.

Of the different selections in the China book, I shall speak in the separate Introductions. Both Taoism and Confucianism are well represented here. I will say here only that, for the immediate problems of this contentious modern world, it is more important to read Laotse than to read Confucius. I have been compelled to make many new translations of my own, including the translation of Laotse's *Book of Tao*. A knowledge of the *Book of History* and *Mencius* is necessary for the understanding of Chinese democratic ideas, of which so little is known to the West. But it may be equally enlightening to find the true spirit of Chinese culture in the family letters and proverbs, and particularly in the *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*. For the answer to the question "What is the spirit of Chinese civilization?" is to be found in the *Six Chapters*, in the picture of Chinese life, not as Chinese thinkers thought life ought to be lived, but as the actual common people have lived it. The *Six Chapters*, as well as the *Family Letters of a Chinese Poet*, gives us some intimate glance into Chinese life, valuable because it was autobiography and not fiction, and was written by a Chinese for Chinese readers. The beauty and ugliness of Chinese family life are there, and there are both good and bad characters in it. But the fundamental temper of the Chinese spirit, its struggles, its longings, its resignations, and its casual glances along the wayside of life, are all there, written down sincerely by a common medium-educated Chinaman who made not too great a success either with his paintings or with his small trade as a commercial traveller.



# CHINESE MYSTICISM

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# Laotse, the Book of Tao

(*The Tao Teh Ching*)

## INTRODUCTION

IF THERE IS ONE BOOK in the whole of Oriental literature which one should read above all the others, it is, in my opinion, Laotse's *Book of Tao*. If there is one book that can claim to interpret for us the spirit of the Orient, or that is necessary to the understanding of characteristic Chinese behaviour, including literally "the ways that are dark," it is the *Book of Tao*. For Laotse's book contains the first enunciated philosophy of camouflage in the world; it teaches the wisdom of appearing foolish, the success of appearing to fail, the strength of weakness and the advantage of lying low, the benefit of yielding to your adversary and the futility of contention for power. It accounts in fact for any mellowness that may be seen in Chinese social and individual behaviour. If one reads enough of this Book, one automatically acquires the habit and ways of the Chinese. I would go further and say that if I were asked what antidote could be found in Oriental literature and philosophy to cure this contentious modern world of its inveterate belief in force and struggle for power, I would name this book of "5,000 words" written some 2,400 years ago. For Laotse (born about 570 B.C.) has the knack of making Hitler and other dreamers of world mastery appear foolish and ridiculous. The chaos of the modern world, I believe, is due to the total lack of a philosophy of the rhythm of life such as we find in Laotse and his brilliant disciple Chuangtse, or anything remotely resembling it. And furthermore, if there is one book advising against the multifarious activities and futile busyness of the modern man, I would again say it is Laotse's *Book of Tao*. It is one of the profoundest books in the world's philosophy.

The message of the book is simple and its dozen ideas are repeated in epigrammatic form again and again. Briefly the ideas are: the rhythm of life, the unity of all world and human phenomena, the importance of keeping the original simplicity of human nature, the danger of over-government and interference with the simple life of the people, the doctrine of *wu-wei* or "inaction," which is better interpreted as "non-interference" and is the exact equivalent of *laissez-faire*, the pervading influence of the spirit, the lessons of humility, quietude and calm, and the folly of force, of pride, and of self-assertion. All these will be understood if one understands the rhythm of life. It is profound and clear, mystic and practical.

Some of the greatest paradoxes in this book are: "Never be the first in the world (LXVII)." "The greatest cleverness appears like stupidity; the greatest eloquence seems like stuttering (XLV)." "The farther one pursues knowledge, the less one knows (XLVII)." "When two equally matched armies meet, it is the man of sorrow who wins (LXIX)." "Even in victory, there is no beauty, and he who calls it beautiful delights in slaughter (XXXI)." "A victory should be celebrated with the Funeral Rite (XXXI)." "For love is victorious in attack and invulnerable in defence. Heaven arms with love those it would not see destroyed (LXVII)." "He gives to other people, and has greater abundance (LXXXI)." "Requite hatred with virtue (LXIII)." "The honest ones I believe; the liars I also believe (XLVIII)." "He who knows does not speak, and he who speaks does not know (LVI)." (On *laissez-faire*): "Rule a big country as you would fry small fish (LX)." In fact, the whole book consists of such paradoxes.

The Book has been traditionally divided into two parts, since Hoshang Kung in the second century B.C. Actually, the original collection consists of various epigrams, and if one reads the developments and connections between the different chapters, one sees even the chapter divisions were not original. (Some late editions of this Book have appeared without chapter divisions.) On the whole, one can make some rough divisions. Ch. I-X describe the general character of the doctrine. Ch. XI-XX develop the doctrine of inaction. Ch. XXI-XXVIII speak of the "models of Tao," and are more mystic. Ch. XXIX-XXXI contain forceful warnings against the use of force. Ch. XXXII-XXXVII speak of the rhythm of life. In Book Two, Ch. XXXVIII-XLIX again emphasize the use of gentleness, simplicity and quietude. Ch. L-LVI have to do with the preservation of life. From Ch. LVII on, the themes become more concrete. Ch. LVII-LXVII give definite advice on government and management of human affairs. Ch. LXVIII-LXIX again touch upon war and camouflage. Ch. LXXII-LXXV contain Laotse's great sayings on crime and

punishment. The last six chapters, LXXVI-LXXXI again give some general advice on the strength of weakness, with some very appropriate advice on peace settlements in Ch. LXXIX. In fact, if the chapters on war and peace could be made required reading for delegates to the Peace Conference, we would have a totally different world. "The virtuous man is for patching up, the vicious for fixing guilt, etc." The advice for big and small countries (Ch. LXI) also seems perfect.

Generally a chapter opens with some paradox and develops it with some parallel remarks, introduced with the word "Therefore." An explanation on the use of this word is important, for it will frequently be taken by the Western reader as misplaced and showing no real logical sequence. One should clearly understand, however, that Chinese logic is both indeterminate and synchronous, instead of determinate, exclusive and sequential as in Western logic. Hence cause may be an effect, and an effect may be part of the cause, which is often nearer the truth. Cause and effect in Chinese are not sequential, but are parallel aspects of the same truth. In Chinese, "therefore" is almost indistinguishable from "for." This is true of Laotse, Chuangtse and many Chinese writers. Isn't our distinction of cause and effect somewhat childish? Try to find out what is the cause of the present war, and one will discover many things about this logic of causality.

There have been many useful criticisms and emendations of the text of Laotse, especially the textual restorations of Yü Yüeh, Want Niensun and others. On the other hand, there has been much useless contention over the shifting of phrases and passages and redivision of chapters by contemporary Chinese authors. These corrections and substitutions seem to derive from the schoolmaster's art of correcting pupils' compositions, cancelling a repetition here and shifting a sentence there where it seems to belong for better stylistic effect. It seems parallel construction must be put together in one paragraph and must never be allowed to appear in another place of the book. Any good writer can confirm the fact that a good essay never follows the schoolmaster's outline, and that where the essay has a fundamental unity of thought, any editor can transpose any sentence and fit it to another passage to the editor's own satisfaction. Corrections of this kind have no place in textual restorations of ancient authors. I am a "conservative" in this respect.

I have therefore followed the conservative division into eighty-one chapters, recognizing that the division was not original. Another interesting fault of these critics is to assume that the divisions were original and then complain that the chapters lack "unity of composition." The text of Laotse exists to-day in a fairly satisfactory form, making such transpositions and redivisions unnecessary. I have not unhesitatingly followed



even the most famous restoration of Wang Niensun, because it does not improve upon the paradox, but rather takes away from it. When the traditional text reads "Fine weapons are instruments of evil," Wang fairly well proved that the word "Fine" was a mistake for another word, like the English adverbial conjunction "now." But to ask how Laotse, the master of paradox, could say that "*fine* weapons are instruments of *evil*," because what is "fine" is not "evil," is sheer stupidity.

Laotse is the most translated of all the Chinese books because of its small volume. I have seen nine translations in German, including the good one by Alexander Ular (Inselverlag). There are the twelve English translations by E. H. Parker, John Chalmers, M. E. Reynolds, Paul Carus, Dwight Goddard and Wei-Tao, Lionel Giles, Isabella Mears, Hu Tse-lin, "editors" of the Shrine of Wisdom, Walter Gorn Old, Ch'u Ta-Kao, John C. H. Wu and Arthur Waley, of which the last two mentioned are the best. I have profited most from the translations by Waley and Mears in my rendering into English. I have, however, found it necessary to make a new translation. Laotse's style is epigrammatic and his language is terse and vigorous, and I have tried to preserve its terse, epigrammatic quality and its sentence rhythm, but I have not tried to reproduce the rhyme in its many passages. Translation is an art of seeking the exact word, and when the exact word is found, circumlocutions can be avoided, and the style preserved. Translation also requires a certain stupidity, and the best translation is the stupid one which does not go out of its way for "brilliant" interpretations. Laotse's advice to "be aware of the Male, but keep to the Female" has been my principle. For only the stupid man has fidelity. Many translators betray that undue and incorrect stress on individual words in regard to their etymology as beginners in a foreign language place undue stress on individual syllables, the one arising from lack of familiarity, the other from lack of fluency. I have given footnotes for the sole purpose of making the meaning of the text more exact and clearer, and have avoided all comments of opinion. The chapter titles are not original, but are supplied by myself for the convenience of the readers.

# Laotse, the Book of Tao

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

## BOOK I: THE PRINCIPLES OF TAO

### I. ON THE ABSOLUTE TAO

The Tao that can be told of  
Is not the Absolute Tao;  
The Names that can be given  
Are not Absolute Names.

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;  
The Named is the Mother of All Things.

Therefore:  
Oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion  
In order to see the Secret of Life;  
Oftentimes, one regards life with passion,  
In order to see its manifest results.

These two (the Secret and its manifestations)  
Are (in their nature) the same;  
They are given different names  
When they become manifest.

They may both be called the Cosmic Mystery:<sup>1</sup>  
Reaching from the Mystery into the Deeper Mystery  
Is the Gate to the Secret<sup>2</sup> of All Life.

<sup>1</sup>*Hsuan*—This word is the equivalent of "mystic" and "mysticism." Taoism is also known as the *Hsiianchiao*, or "Mystic Religion."

<sup>2</sup>*Miao* may also be translated as "Essence"; it means "the wonderful," the "ultimate," the "logically unknowable," the "quintessence," or "esoteric truth."

## II. THE RISE OF RELATIVE OPPOSITES

When the people of the Earth all know beauty as beauty,  
 There arises (the recognition of) ugliness.  
 When the people of the Earth all know the good as good,  
 There arises (the recognition of) evil.

Therefore:

Being and non-being interdepend in growth;  
 Difficult and easy interdepend in completion;  
 Long and short interdepend in contrast;  
 High and low interdepend in position;  
 Tones and voice interdepend in harmony;  
 Front and behind interdepend in company.

Therefore the Sage:

Manages the affairs without action;  
 Preaches the doctrine without words;  
 All things take their rise, but he does not turn away from them;  
 He gives them life, but does not take possession of them;  
 He acts, but does not appropriate;  
 Accomplishes, but claims no credit.  
 It is because he lays claim to no credit  
 That the credit cannot be taken away from him.

## III. ACTION WITHOUT DEEDS

Exalt not the wise,<sup>3</sup>

So that the people shall not scheme and contend;  
 Prize not rare objects,  
 So that the people shall not steal;  
 Shut out from sight the things of desire,  
 So that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed.

Therefore in the government of the Sage:

He keeps empty their hearts <sup>4</sup>  
 Makes full their bellies,  
 Discourages their ambitions,  
 Strengthens their frames;

<sup>3</sup> Exalting the wise in government is a typically Confucianist idea.

<sup>4</sup> "Empty-heart" in the Chinese language means "open-mindedness," or "humility," a sign of the cultured gentleman. Throughout this book, "empty" and "full" are used as meaning "humility" and "pride" respectively.

So that the people may be purified of their thoughts and desires.  
And the cunning ones shall not presume to interfere.<sup>5</sup>

By action without deeds  
May all live in peace.

#### IV. THE CHARACTER OF TAO

Tao is all-pervading,<sup>6</sup>  
And its use is inexhaustible!  
Fathomless!  
Like the fountain head of all things.  
Its sharp edges rounded off,  
Its tangles untied,  
Its light tempered,  
Its turmoil submerged,  
Yet crystal clear like still water it seems to remain.  
I do not know whose Son it is,  
An image of what existed before God.

#### V. NATURE

Nature is unkind:  
It treats the creation like sacrificial straw-dogs.  
The Sage is unkind:  
He treats the people like sacrificial straw-dogs.<sup>7</sup>

How the universe is like a bellows!  
Empty, yet it gives a supply that never fails;  
The more it is worked, the more it brings forth.  
By many words is wit exhausted.  
Rather, therefore, hold to the core.<sup>8</sup>

#### VI. THE SPIRIT OF THE VALLEY

The Spirit of the Valley <sup>9</sup> never dies.  
It is called the Mystic Female.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Wei*, "to act," frequently used in this book to denote "interfere." *Wu-wei*, or "inaction," practically means non-interference, for it is the exact equivalent of "*laissez-faire*."

<sup>6</sup> *Ch'ung*, "empty," "mild," "formless," "filling all space." Another reading, *chung*, "Tao is an empty vessel."

<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of naturalism, the Sage reaching the impartiality and often the stolid indifference of Nature.

<sup>8</sup> Centre, the original nature of man. "Hold to the core" is an important Taoist tenet.

<sup>9</sup> The Valley, like the bellows, is a symbol of Taoistic "emptiness."

<sup>10</sup> The principle of *yin* the negative, the receptive, the quiescent.

The Door of the Mystic Female  
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.

Continuously, continuously,  
It seems to remain.  
Draw upon it  
And it serves you with ease.<sup>11</sup>

## VII. LIVING FOR OTHERS

The universe is everlasting.  
The reason the universe is everlasting  
Is that it does not live for Self.<sup>12</sup>  
Therefore it can long endure.

Therefore the Sage puts himself last,  
And finds himself in the foremost place;  
Regards his body as accidental,  
And his body is thereby preserved.  
Is it not because he does not live for Self  
That his Self achieves perfection?

## VIII. WATER

The best of men is like water;  
Water benefits all things  
And does not compete with them.  
It dwells in (the lowly) places that all disdain,—  
Wherein it comes near to the Tao.

In his dwelling, (the Sage) loves the (lowly) earth;  
In his heart, he loves what is profound;  
In his relations with others, he loves kindness;  
In his words, he loves sincerity;  
In government, he loves peace;  
In business affairs, he loves ability;  
In his actions, he loves choosing the right time.  
It is because he does not contend  
That he is without reproach.

<sup>11</sup> He who makes use of nature's laws accomplishes results "without labour."

<sup>12</sup> Gives life to others through its transformations.

## IX. THE DANGER OF OVERWEENING SUCCESS

Stretch (a bow)<sup>13</sup> to the very full,  
 And you will wish you had stopped in time.  
 Temper a (sword-edge) to its very sharpest,  
 And the edge will not last long.  
 When gold and jade fill your hall,  
 You will not be able to keep them safe.  
 To be proud with wealth and honour  
 Is to sow the seeds of one's own downfall.  
 Retire when your work is done,  
 Such is Heaven's way.<sup>14</sup>

## X. EMBRACING THE ONE

In embracing the One <sup>15</sup> with your soul,  
 Can you never forsake the Tao?  
 In controlling your vital force to achieve gentleness,  
 Can you become like the new-born child? <sup>16</sup>  
 In cleansing and purifying your Mystic vision,  
 Can you strive after perfection?  
 In loving the people and governing the kingdom,  
 Can you rule without interference?

In opening and shutting the Gates of Heaven,  
 Can you play the part of the Female? <sup>17</sup>  
 In comprehending all knowledge,  
 Can you renounce the mind? <sup>18</sup>

To give birth, to nourish,  
 To give birth without taking possession,  
 To act without appropriation,  
 To be chief among men without managing them—  
 This is the Mystic Virtue.

<sup>13</sup> Throughout Laotse, the idea of *ying*, "fullness" or "filled to the brim," associated with pride, is condemned as the opposite of "emptiness" or "humility," because success contains the seeds of downfall.

<sup>14</sup> The whole chapter is rhymed.

<sup>15</sup> Important phrase in Taoism.

<sup>16</sup> The babe as symbol of innocence, a common imagery found also in Chuangtse; sometimes the imagery of the "new-born calf" is used.

<sup>17</sup> The *Yin*, the receptive, the passive, the quiet.

<sup>18</sup> This section is rhymed throughout.

## XI. THE UTILITY OF NOT-BEING

Thirty spokes unite around the nave;  
 From their not-being (losing of their individuality)  
 Arises the utility of the wheel.  
 Mould clay into a vessel;  
 From its not-being (in the vessel's hollow)  
 Arises the utility of the vessel.  
 Cut out doors and windows in the house (-wall),  
 From their not-being (empty space) arises the utility of the house.  
 Therefore by the existence of things we profit.  
 And by the non-existence of things we are served.

## XII. THE SENSES

The five colours blind the eyes of man;  
 The five musical notes deafen the ears of man;  
 The five flavours dull the taste of man;  
 Horse-racing, hunting and chasing madden the minds of man;  
 Rare, valuable goods keep their owners awake at night.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore the Sage:  
 Provides for the belly and not for the eye.<sup>20</sup>  
 Hence, he rejects the one and accepts the other.

## XIII. PRAISE AND BLAME

"Favour and disgrace cause one dismay;  
 What we value and what we fear are as if within our Self."

What does this mean:  
 "Favour and disgrace cause one dismay?"  
 Those who receive a favour from above  
 Are dismayed when they receive it,  
 And dismayed when they lose it.

What does this mean:  
 "What we value and what we fear <sup>21</sup> are as if within our Self?"  
 We have fears because we have a self.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Lit. "Keep one on one's guard."

<sup>20</sup> "Belly" here refers to the inner self, the unconscious, the instinctive; the "eye" refers to the external self or the sensuous world.

<sup>21</sup> Interpreted as life and death. The text of Chuangtse confirms this interpretation.

<sup>22</sup> Lit. "body."

When we do not regard that self as self,  
What have we to fear?

Therefore he who values the world as his self  
May then be entrusted with the government of the world;  
And he who loves the world as his self—  
The world may then be entrusted to his care.

#### XIV. PREHISTORIC ORIGINS

Looked at, but cannot be seen—  
That is called the Invisible (*yi*).  
Listened to, but cannot be heard—  
That is called the Inaudible (*hsi*).  
Grasped at, but cannot be touched—  
That is called the Intangible (*wei*).<sup>23</sup>  
These three elude all our inquiries  
And hence blend and become One.

Not by its rising, is there light,  
Nor by its sinking, is there darkness.  
Unceasing, continuous,  
It cannot be defined,  
And reverts again to the realm of nothingness.  
That is why it is called the Form of the Formless,  
The Image of Nothingness.  
That is why it is called the Elusive:  
Meet it and you do not see its face;  
Follow it and you do not see its back.

He who holds fast to the Tao of old  
In order to manage the affairs of Now  
Is able to know the Primeval Beginnings  
Which are the continuity <sup>24</sup> of Tao.

#### XV. THE WISE ONES OF OLD

The wise ones <sup>25</sup> of old had subtle wisdom and depth of understanding,  
So profound that they could not be understood.

<sup>23</sup> Jesuit scholars consider these three words (in ancient Chinese pronounced nearly like *i-hi-wei*) an interesting coincidence with the Hebrew word "*Jahve*."

<sup>24</sup> *Chi*, a word meaning "main body of tradition," "system" and also "discipline."

<sup>25</sup> Another ancient text, the "rulers."



And because they could not be understood,  
Perforce must they be so described:

Cautious, like crossing a wintry stream,  
Irresolute, like one fearing danger all around,  
Grave, like one acting as guest,  
Self-effacing, like ice beginning to melt,  
Genuine,<sup>26</sup> like a piece of undressed wood,<sup>27</sup>  
Open-minded, like a valley,  
And mixing freely,<sup>28</sup> like murky water.

Who can find repose in a muddy world?  
By lying still, it becomes clear.  
Who can maintain his calm for long?  
By activity, it comes back to life.

He who embraces this Tao  
Guards against being over-full.  
Because he guards against being over-full,<sup>29</sup>  
He is beyond wearing out and renewal.

## XVI. KNOWING THE ETERNAL LAW

Attain the utmost in Humility;<sup>30</sup>  
Hold firm to the basis of Quietude.

The myriad things take shape and rise to activity,  
But I watch them fall back to their repose.  
Like vegetation that luxuriantly grows  
But returns to the root (soil) from which it springs.

To return to the root is Repose;  
It is called going back to one's Destiny.  
Going back to one's Destiny is to find the Eternal Law.<sup>31</sup>  
To know the Eternal Law is Enlightenment.

<sup>26</sup> *Tun*, "thickness," like solid furniture, associated with the original simplicity of man, in opposition to "thinness," associated with cunning, over-refinement and sophistication.

<sup>27</sup> *P'u*, important Taoist idea, the uncarved, the unembellished, the natural goodness and honesty of man. Generally used to mean simplicity, plainness of heart and living.

<sup>28</sup> *Hun*, "muddled," "mixing freely," therefore "easygoing" "not particular." Taoist wisdom: a wise man should appear like a fool.

<sup>29</sup> Self-satisfaction, conceit.  
<sup>30</sup> *Hsiü*: emptiness, void. But in actual usage, this "emptiness" has no other meaning than "humility." Both "humility" and "quietude" are central Taoist ideas.

<sup>31</sup> *Ch'ang*, the "constant," the law of growth and decay, of necessary alternation of opposites, can be interpreted as the "universal law of nature," or the "inner law of man," the true self (*hsingming chih ch'ang*), the two being identical in their nature

And not to know the Eternal Law  
Is to court disaster.

He who knows the Eternal Law is tolerant;  
Being tolerant, he is impartial;  
Being impartial, he is kingly; <sup>32</sup>  
Being kingly, he is in accord with Nature; <sup>33</sup>  
Being in accord with Nature, he is in accord with Tao;  
Being in accord with Tao, he is eternal,  
And his whole life is preserved from harm.

## XVII. RULERS

Of the best rulers

The people (only) know <sup>34</sup> that they exist;  
The next best they love and praise;  
The next they fear;  
And the next they revile.  
When they do not command the people's faith,  
Some will lose faith in them,  
And then they resort to oaths!  
But (of the best) when their task is accomplished, their work  
done,  
The people all remark, "We have done it ourselves."

## XVIII. THE DECLINE OF TAO

On the decline of the great Tao,  
The doctrines of "love" and "justice" <sup>35</sup> arose.  
When knowledge and cleverness appeared,  
Great hypocrisy followed in its wake.

When the six relationships no longer lived at peace,  
There was (praise of) "kind parents" and "filial sons."  
When a country fell into chaos and misrule,  
There was (praise of) "loyal ministers."

<sup>32</sup> *Wang*; a possible translation is "cosmopolitan," i.e. regarding the world as one.

<sup>33</sup> *T'ien*, heaven or nature. Both "t'ien" here and Tao in the next line are clearly used as adjectives; hence the translation "in accord with." *T'ien* very commonly means "nature," or "natural."

<sup>34</sup> Some texts read: "The people do *not* know."

<sup>35</sup> Essential Confucian doctrines, usually translated (badly) as "benevolence" and "righteousness."

## XIX. REALIZE THE SIMPLE SELF

Banish wisdom, discard knowledge,  
 And the people shall profit a hundredfold;  
 Banish "love," discard "justice,"  
 And the people shall recover love of their kin;  
 Banish cunning, discard "utility,"  
 And the thieves and brigands shall disappear.<sup>36</sup>  
 As these three touch the externals and are inadequate;  
 The people have need of what they can depend upon:  
 Reveal thy Simple Self,<sup>37</sup>  
 Embrace thy Original Nature,  
 Check thy selfishness,  
 Curtail thy desires.<sup>38</sup>

## XX. THE WORLD AND I

Banish learning, and vexations end.  
 Between "Ah!" and "Ough!"<sup>39</sup>  
 How much difference is there?  
 Between "good" and "evil"  
 How much difference is there?  
 That which men fear  
 Is indeed to be feared;  
 But, alas, distant yet is the dawn (of awakening)!

The people of the world are merry-making,  
 As if eating of the sacrificial offerings,  
 As if mounting the terrace in spring;  
 I alone am mild, like one unemployed,  
 Like a new-born babe that cannot yet smile,  
 Unattached, like one without a home.

The people of the world have enough and to spare,  
 But I am like one left out,  
 My heart must be that of a fool,  
 Being muddled, nebulous!

<sup>36</sup> The ideas of Chapters 18 and 19 are fully developed by Chuangtse (Ch. X, "Opening Trunks").

<sup>37</sup> *Su*, the unadorned, uncultured, the innate quality, simple self; originally "plain silk background" as opposed to superimposed coloured drawings; hence the expression to "reveal," "realize" *su*.

<sup>38</sup> The eight characters in these four lines sum up practical Taoist teachings.

<sup>39</sup> *Wei* and *o*. "O" an utterance of disapproval.

The vulgar are knowing, luminous;  
 I alone am dull, confused.  
 The vulgar are clever, self-assured;  
 I alone, depressed.  
 Patient as the sea,  
 Adrift, seemingly aimless.

The people of the world all have a purpose;  
 I alone appear stubborn and uncouth.  
 I alone differ from the other people,  
 And value drawing sustenance from the Mother.<sup>40</sup>

## XXI. MANIFESTATIONS OF TAO

The marks of great Virtue <sup>41</sup>  
 Follow alone from the Tao.

The thing that is called Tao  
 Is elusive, evasive.  
 Evasive, elusive,  
 Yet latent in it are forms.  
 Elusive, evasive,  
 Yet latent in it are objects  
 Dark and dim,  
 Yet latent in it is the life-force.  
 The life-force being very true,  
 Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now  
 Its Named (manifested forms) have never ceased,  
 By which we may view the Father of All Things.  
 How do I know the shape of Father of All Things?  
 Through These! <sup>42</sup>

## XXII. FUTILITY OF CONTENTION

To yield is to be preserved whole.  
 To be bent is to become straight.  
 To be hollow is to be filled.

<sup>40</sup> Imagery of the sucking child, symbolizing drawing power from Mother Nature.

<sup>41</sup> *Teh* as manifestation of Tao, the active aspect of Tao, the moral principle, tr. by Waley as "power."

<sup>42</sup> Manifested forms.

To be tattered is to be renewed.  
 To be in want is to possess.  
 To have plenty is to be confused.

Therefore the Sage embraces the One,<sup>43</sup>  
 And becomes the model of the world.  
 He does not reveal himself,  
     And is therefore luminous.<sup>44</sup>  
 He does not justify himself,  
     And is therefore far-famed.  
 He does not boast of himself,  
     And therefore people give him credit.  
 He does not pride himself,  
     And is therefore the ruler among men.

Is it because he does not contend  
 That no one in the world can contend against him.

Is it not indeed true, as the ancients say,  
 "To yield is to be preserved whole?"<sup>45</sup>  
 Thus he is preserved and the world does him homage.

### XXIII. IDENTIFICATION WITH TAO

Nature says few words:  
 Hence it is that a squall lasts not a whole morning.  
 A rainstorm continues not a whole day.  
 Where do they come from?  
 From Nature.  
 Even Nature does not last long (in its utterances),  
     How much less should human beings?

Therefore it is that:  
     He who follows the Tao is identified with the Tao.  
     He who follows Virtue (*Teh*) is identified with Virtue.  
     He who abandons (Tao) is identified with abandonment (of Tao).  
 He who is identified with Tao—  
     Tao is also glad to welcome him.

<sup>43</sup> The Absolute, to which transient attributes revert.

<sup>44</sup> *Ming* with two meanings, "clear" (bright, sterling) and "clear-sighted" (wise, discerning).

<sup>45</sup> Another Chinese proverb: "Yield your land boundaries all your life and you never lose half; yield your way to fellow passengers all your life and you never lose a step."

He who is identified with Virtue—  
 Virtue is also glad to welcome him.  
 He who is identified with abandonment—  
 Abandonment is also glad to welcome him.  
 He who has not enough faith  
 Will not be able to command faith from others.

#### XXIV. THE DREGS AND TUMOURS OF VIRTUE

He who stands on tiptoe does not stand (firm);  
 He who strains his strides <sup>46</sup> does not walk (well);  
 He who reveals himself is not luminous;  
 He who justifies himself is not far-famed;  
 He who boasts of himself is not given credit;  
 He who prides himself is not chief among men.  
 These in the eyes of Tao  
 Are called "the dregs and tumours of Virtue,"  
 Which are things of disgust.  
 Therefore the man of Tao spurns them.

#### XXV. THE FOUR ETERNAL MODELS

Before the Heaven and Earth existed  
 There was something nebulous:  
 Silent, isolated,  
 Standing alone, changing not,  
 Eternally revolving without fail,  
 Worthy to be the Mother of All Things.  
 I do not know its name  
 And address it as Tao.  
 If forced to give it a name, I shall call it "Great."  
 Being great implies reaching out in space,  
 Reaching out in space implies far-reaching.  
 Far-reaching implies reversion to the original point.

Therefore: Tao is Great,  
 The Heaven is great,  
 The Earth is great,  
 The King is also great.  
 These are the Great Four in the universe,  
 And the King is one of them.

<sup>46</sup> Hurrying, striving, ambitious.

Man models himself after the Earth;  
 The Earth models itself after Heaven;  
 The Heaven models itself after Tao;  
 Tao models itself after Nature.<sup>47</sup>

## XXVI. HEAVINESS AND LIGHTNESS

The Solid <sup>48</sup> is the root of the light;  
 The Quiescent is the master of the Hasty.

Therefore the Sage travels all day  
 Yet never leaves his provision-cart.<sup>49</sup>  
 In the midst of honour and glory,  
 He lives leisurely, undisturbed.  
 How can the ruler of a great country  
 Make light of his body in the empire? <sup>50</sup>  
 In light frivolity, the Centre is lost;  
 In hasty action, self-mastery is lost.

## XXVII. ON STEALING THE LIGHT

A good runner leaves no track.  
 A good speech leaves no flaws for attack.  
 A good reckoner makes use of no counters.  
 A well shut door makes use of no bolts,  
 And yet cannot be opened.  
 A well-tied knot makes use of no rope,  
 And yet cannot be untied.  
 Therefore the Sage is good at helping men;  
 For that reason there is no rejected (useless) person.  
 He is good at saving things;  
 For that reason there is nothing rejected.<sup>51</sup>  
 —This is called stealing <sup>52</sup> the Light.

<sup>47</sup> *Tse-jan*, lit. "self-so," "self-formed," "that which is so by itself."

<sup>48</sup> Literally "heavy," with the Earth as model. In Chinese, "heaviness" or "thickness" of character, meaning "honesty," "generosity," is associated with the idea of stable luck and endurance, whereas "thinness" or "lightness" of character, meaning "frivolity" or "sharpness," is associated with lack of stable luck.

<sup>49</sup> A pun on the phrase, containing the word "heavy."

<sup>50</sup> By rushing about.

<sup>51</sup> The Sage uses each according to his talent.

<sup>52</sup> *Hsi*, to enter or secure by devious means such as invasion, attack at night, penetration, etc. The idea is cunningly to make use of knowledge of nature's law to obtain the best results. See full development by Chuangtse, especially in his parable of Prince Hui's cook. Ch. III.

Therefore the good man is the Teacher of the bad.  
And the bad man is the lesson <sup>53</sup> of the good.

He who neither values his teacher  
Nor loves the lesson  
Is one gone far astray,  
Though he be learned.  
—Such is the subtle secret.

## XXVIII. KEEPING TO THE FEMALE

He who is aware of the Male  
But keeps to the Female  
Becomes the ravine <sup>54</sup> of the world.  
Being the ravine of the world,  
He has the eternal power <sup>55</sup> which never fails,  
And returns again to the (innocence of) the babe.

He who is conscious of the white (bright)  
But keeps to the black (dark)  
Becomes the model for the world.  
Being the model for the world,  
He has the eternal power which never errs,  
And returns again to the Primordial Nothingness.  
He who is familiar with honour and glory  
But keeps to obscurity  
Becomes the valley of the world.  
Being the valley of the world,  
He has an eternal power which always suffices,  
And returns again to pristine simplicity.

Break up this pristine simplicity <sup>56</sup>  
And it is shaped into tools.  
In the hands of the Sage,  
They become the officials and magistrates.  
Therefore the great ruler does not cut up.

<sup>53</sup> *Tse*, raw-material, resources, help, something to draw upon for profit, such as a lesson.

<sup>54</sup> See Ch. VI. The valley, or ravine is symbol of the Female Principle, the receptive, the passive.

<sup>55</sup> *Teh*.

<sup>56</sup> *P'u*, a piece of unhewn wood, symbol of unspoiled Nature.



## XXIX. WARNING AGAINST INTERFERENCE

There are those who will conquer the world  
And make of it (what they conceive or desire)

I see that they will not succeed.

(For) the world is God's own Vessel

It cannot be made (by human interference).

He who makes it spoils it.

He who holds it loses it.

For: Some things go forward,

Some things follow behind;

Some blow hot,

And some blow cold; <sup>57</sup>

Some are strong,

And some are weak;

Some may break,

And some may fall.

Hence the Sage eschews excess,

eschews extravagance,

eschews pride.

## XXX. WARNING AGAINST THE USE OF FORCE

He who by Tao purposes to help the ruler of men

Will oppose all conquest by force of arms.<sup>58</sup>

For such things are wont to rebound.

Where armies are, thorns and brambles grow.

The raising of a great host

Is followed by a year of dearth.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore a good general effects his purpose and stops.

He dares not rely upon the strength of arms;

Effects his purpose and does not glory in it;

Effects his purpose and does not boast of it;

Effects his purpose and does not take pride in it;

Effects his purpose as a regrettable necessity;

Effects his purpose but does not love violence.

<sup>57</sup> Lit. "blow out," "blow in." I follow Waley's rendering, which conveys the meaning perfectly.

<sup>58</sup> The Chinese character for "military" is composed of two parts: "stop" and "arms." Chinese pacifists interpret this as meaning disapproval of arms ("stop armament"), whereas it may just as well mean to stop the enemy by force. Etymologically, however, the word for "stop" is a picture of a footprint, so the whole is a picture of a "spear" over "footprints."

<sup>59</sup> These six lines are by Waley, for they cannot be improved upon.

(For) things age after reaching their prime.  
That (violence) would be against the Tao.  
And he who is against the Tao perishes young.

## XXXI. WEAPONS OF EVIL

Of all things, soldiers <sup>60</sup> are instruments of evil,  
Hated by men.  
Therefore the religious man (possessed of Tao) avoids them.  
The gentleman favours the left in civilian life,  
But on military occasions favours the right.<sup>61</sup>

Soldiers are weapons of evil.  
They are not the weapons of the gentleman.  
When the use of soldiers cannot be helped,  
The best policy is calm restraint.

Even in victory, there is no beauty,<sup>62</sup>  
And who calls it beautiful  
Is one who delights in slaughter.  
He who delights in slaughter  
Will not succeed in his ambition to rule the world.

[The things of good omen favour the left.  
The things of ill omen favour the right.  
The lieutenant-general stands on the left,  
The general stands on the right.  
That is to say, it is celebrated as a Funeral Rite.]  
The slaying of multitudes should be mourned with sorrow.  
A victory should be celebrated with the Funeral Rite.<sup>63</sup>

## XXXII. TAO IS LIKE THE SEA

Tao is absolute and has no name.  
Though the uncarved wood is small,

<sup>60</sup> Another reading, "fine weapons." *Ping* can mean both "soldiers" and "weapons."

<sup>61</sup> These are ceremonial arrangements. The left is symbol of good omen, the creative; the right is symbol of bad omen, the destructive.

<sup>62</sup> Another equally good reading, "no boasting," "and who boasts of victory."

<sup>63</sup> One of the five Cardinal Rites of *Chou-li*. The last five lines but two read like a commentary, interpolated in the text by mistake. The evidence is conclusive: (1) The terms "lieutenant general" and "general" are the only ones in the whole text that are anachronisms, for these terms did not exist till Han times. (2) The commentary by Wang Pi is missing in this chapter, so it must have slipped into the text by a copyist's mistake. See also Ch. 69. Cf. Mencius, "The best fighter should receive the supreme punishment"; again, "Only he who does not love slaughter can unify the empire."

It cannot be employed (used as vessel) by anyone.  
 If kings and barons can keep (this unspoiled nature),  
 The whole world shall yield them lordship of their own accord.

The Heaven and Earth join,  
 And the sweet rain falls,  
 Beyond the command of men,  
 Yet evenly upon all.

Then human civilization arose and there were names.<sup>64</sup>  
 Since names there were,  
 It were well one knew where to stop for repose.  
 He who knows where to stop for repose  
 May from danger be exempt.  
 Tao in the world  
 May be compared  
 To rivers that run into the sea.<sup>65</sup>

### XXXIII. KNOWING ONESELF

He who knows others is learned;  
 He who knows himself is wise.  
 He who conquers others has power of muscles;  
 He who conquers himself is strong.  
 He who is contented is rich.  
 He who is determined has strength of will.  
 He who does not lose his centre endures,  
 He who dies yet (his power) remains has long life.

### XXXIV. THE GREAT TAO FLOWS EVERYWHERE

The Great Tao flows everywhere,  
 (Like a flood) it may go left or right.  
 The myriad things derive their life from it,  
 And it does not deny them.  
 When its work is accomplished,  
 It does not take possession.  
 It clothes and feeds the myriad things,  
 Yet does not claim them as its own.  
 Often (regarded) without mind or passion,

<sup>64</sup> Names imply differentiation of things and loss of original state of Tao.

<sup>65</sup> Really to be compared to the sea, or to the rivers seeking repose in the sea.

It may be considered small.  
 Being the home <sup>66</sup> of all things, yet claiming not,  
 It may be considered great.  
 Because to the end it does not claim greatness,  
 Its greatness is achieved.

## XXXV. THE PEACE OF TAO

Hold the Great Symbol <sup>67</sup>  
 And all the world follows,  
 Follows without meeting harm,  
 (And lives in) health, peace, commonwealth.  
 Offer good things to eat  
 And the wayfarer stays.  
 But Tao is mild to the taste.  
 Looked at, it cannot be seen;  
 Listened to, it cannot be heard;  
 Applied, its supply never fails.

## XXXVI. THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

He who is to be made to dwindle (in power)  
 Must first be caused to expand.  
 He who is to be weakened  
 Must first be made strong,  
 He who is to be laid low  
 Must first be exalted to power.  
 He who is to be taken away from  
 Must first be given,  
 —This is the Subtle Light.

Gentleness overcomes strength:  
 Fish should be left in the deep pool,  
 And sharp weapons of the state should be left  
 Where none can see them.

## XXXVII. WORLD PEACE

The Tao never does,  
 Yet through it everything is done.  
 If kings and barons can keep the Tao,

<sup>66</sup> Lit. "rendezvous."

<sup>67</sup> The symbol of Nature, Heaven or Earth. This chapter consists of rhymed three-word lines.

The world will of its own accord be reformed.  
 When reformed and rising to action,  
 Let it be restrained by the Nameless pristine simplicity.  
 The Nameless pristine simplicity  
 Is stripped of desire (for contention).  
 By stripping of desire quiescence is achieved,  
 And the world arrives at peace of its own accord.

## BOOK II: THE APPLICATION OF TAO<sup>68</sup>

### XXXVIII. DEGENERATION

The man of superior virtue is not (conscious of his) virtue,  
 Hence he is virtuous.  
 The man of inferior virtue (is intent on) not losing virtue,  
 Hence he is devoid of virtue.  
 The man of superior virtue never acts,  
 Nor ever (does so) with an ulterior motive.  
 The man of inferior virtue acts,  
 And (does so) with an ulterior motive.  
 The man of superior kindness acts,  
 But (does so) without an ulterior motive.  
 The man of superior justice acts,  
 And (does so) with an ulterior motive.  
 (But when) the man of superior *li* <sup>69</sup> acts and finds no response,  
 He rolls up his sleeves to force it on others.

Therefore:

After Tao is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) kindness,  
 After kindness is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) justice.  
 After justice is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) *li*.  
 Now *li* is the thinning out of loyalty and honesty of heart.  
 And the beginning of chaos.  
 The prophets are the flowering of Tao  
 And the origin of folly.

<sup>68</sup> The name, the "Book of Teh" (virtue) was given to the Second Section by Hoshang Kung in the reign of Han Wenti (179-157 B.C.).

<sup>69</sup> *Li*, Confucian doctrine of social order and control, characterized by rituals; also courtesy, good manners.

Therefore the noble man dwells in the heavy (base),  
 And not in the thinning (end).  
 He dwells in the fruit,  
 And not in the flowering (expression).  
 Therefore he rejects the one and accepts the other.

### XXXIX. UNITY THROUGH COMPLEMENTS

There were those in ancient times possessed of the One:  
 Through possession of the One, the Heaven was clarified,  
 Through possession of the One, the Earth was stabilized,  
 Through possession of the One, the gods were spiritualized,  
 Through possession of the One, the valleys were made full,  
 Through possession of the One, all things lived and grew,  
 Through possession of the One, the princes and dukes became the  
 ennobled of the people.  
 —That was how each became so.

Without clarity, the Heavens might shake,  
 Without stability, the Earth might quake,  
 Without spiritual power, the gods might crumble,  
 Without being filled, the valleys might crack,  
 Without the life-giving power, all things might perish,  
 Without the ennobling power, the kings and barons might stumble and  
 fall.

Therefore the nobility depend upon the common man for support,  
 And the exalted ones depend upon the lowly for their base.

That is why the princes and dukes call themselves "the orphaned," "the  
 lonely one," "the unworthy."  
 Is it not true then that they depend upon the common man for support?  
 Truly, take down the parts of a chariot,  
 And there is no chariot (left).<sup>70</sup>  
 Rather than jingle like the jade,  
 Rumble like the rocks.

<sup>70</sup> Another commonly accepted reading through word-substitution in the text: "Truly, the highest prestige requires no praise." Apart from the forced substitution of words, this reading makes no sense in the context.

## XL. THE PRINCIPLE OF REVERSION

Reversion is the action of Tao.

Gentleness is the function of Tao.

The things of this world come from Being,  
And Being (comes) from Non-being.

## XLI. QUALITIES OF THE TAOIST

When the highest type of men hear the Tao (truth),  
They practise it diligently.

When the mediocre type hear the Tao,  
They seem to be aware and yet unaware of it.

When the lowest type hear the Tao,  
They break into loud laughter,—  
If it were not laughed at, it would not be Tao.

Therefore there is the established saying:

“Who understands Tao seems dull of comprehension;  
Who is advanced in Tao seems to slip backwards;  
Who moves on the even Tao (Path) seems to go up and down.”

Superior virtue appears like a hollow (valley);

Sheer white appears like tarnished;

Great character appears like insufficient;

Solid character appears like infirm;

Pure worth appears like contaminated.

Great space has no corners;

Great talent takes long to mature;

Great music is faintly heard;

Great Form has no contour;

And Tao is hidden without a name.

It is this Tao that is adept at lending (its power) and bringing fulfilment.

## XLII. THE VIOLENT MAN

Out of Tao, One is born;

Out of One, Two;

Out of Two, Three;

Out of Three, the created universe

The created universe carries the *yin* at its back and the *yang* in front;

Through the union of the pervading principles it reaches harmony.

To be "orphaned," "lonely" and "unworthy" is what men hate most.  
 Yet the kings and dukes call themselves by such names.  
 For sometimes things are benefited by being taken away from,  
 And suffer by being added to.  
 Others have taught this maxim,  
 Which I shall teach also:  
 "The violent man shall die a violent death."  
 This I shall regard as my spiritual teacher.

### XLIII. THE SOFTEST SUBSTANCE

The softest substance of the world  
 Goes through the hardest.  
 That-which-is-without-form penetrates that-which-has-no-crevice;  
 Through this I know the benefit of taking no action.<sup>71</sup>  
 The teaching without words  
 And the benefit of taking no action  
 Are without compare in the universe.

### XLIV. BE CONTENT

Fame or one's own self, which does one love more?  
 One's own self or material goods, which has more worth?  
 Loss (of self) or possession (of goods), which is the greater evil?

Therefore: he who loves most spends most,  
 He who hoards much loses much.  
 The contented man meets no disgrace;  
 Who knows when to stop runs into no danger—  
 He can long endure.

### XLV. CALM QUIETUDE

The highest perfection is like imperfection,<sup>72</sup>  
 And its use is never impaired.  
 The greatest abundance seems meagre,  
 And its use will never fail.  
 What is most straight appears devious;

<sup>71</sup> Pervading influence of the spirit reaches everywhere, in contrast with superficial activities which create obstacles of their own. "That-which-is-without-form," etc., is further developed by Chuangtse (Ch. III).

<sup>72</sup> Because it assumes fluid form according to circumstances.



The greatest cleverness appears like stupidity;  
 The greatest eloquence seems like stuttering.  
 Movement overcomes cold,  
 (But) keeping still overcomes heat.  
 Who is calm and quiet becomes the guide for the universe.

#### XLVI. RACING HORSES

When the world lives in accord with Tao,  
 Racing horses are turned back to haul refuse carts.  
 When the world lives not in accord with Tao,  
 Cavalry abounds in the countryside.

There is no greater curse than the lack of contentment.  
 No greater sin than the desire for possession.  
 Therefore he who is contented with contentment shall be always content.

#### XLVII. PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

Without stepping outside one's doors,  
     One can know what is happening in the world,  
 Without looking out of one's windows,  
     One can see the Tao of Heaven.

The farther one pursues knowledge,  
     The less one knows.  
 Therefore the Sage knows without running about,  
     Understands without seeing,  
     Accomplishes without doing.

#### XLVIII. CONQUERING THE WORLD BY INACTION

The student of knowledge (aims at) learning day by day;  
 The student of Tao (aims at) losing day by day.  
     By continual losing  
     One reaches doing nothing (*laissez-faire*).  
     By doing nothing everything is done.  
 He who conquers the world often does so by doing nothing.<sup>73</sup>  
 When one is compelled to do something,<sup>74</sup>  
 The world is already beyond his conquering.

<sup>73</sup> By moral influence.

<sup>74</sup> By ordering people about.

## XLIX. THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS

The Sage has no decided opinion and feelings,<sup>75</sup>  
 But regards the people's opinions and feelings as his own.

The good ones I declare good;  
 The bad ones I also declare good.  
     That is the goodness of Virtue.  
 The honest ones I believe;  
 The liars I also believe;  
     That is the faith of Virtue.

The Sage dwells in the world peacefully, harmoniously.  
 The people of the world are brought into a community of heart,  
 And the Sage regards them all as his own children.

## L. THE PRESERVING OF LIFE

Out of life, death enters.  
 The organs of life are thirteen;<sup>76</sup>  
 The organs of death are (also) thirteen.  
 What send man to death in this life are also (these) thirteen.  
     How is it so?  
 Because of the intense activity of multiplying life.

It has been said that he who is a good preserver of his life  
     Meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on land,  
     Is not vulnerable to weapons in the field of battle.  
 The horns of the wild buffalo are powerless against him;  
 The paws of the tiger are useless against him;  
 The weapons of the soldier cannot avail against him.  
     How is it so?  
 Because he is beyond death.<sup>77</sup>

## LI. THE MYSTIC VIRTUE

Tao gives them birth,  
 Teh (virtue) fosters them.  
 The material world gives them form.

<sup>75</sup> *Hsin*, Lit. "heart." Both thinking and feeling are denoted by this word. It is impossible to say a "decided heart."

<sup>76</sup> According to Han Fei, the four limbs and nine external cavities. Another orthodox reading is "three-tenths," but this makes less sense.

<sup>77</sup> Lit. "deathless."

The circumstances of the moment complete them.  
 Therefore all things of the universe worship Tao and exalt Teh.  
 Tao is worshipped and Teh is exalted  
 Without anyone's order and is so of its own accord.

Therefore Tao gives them birth,  
 Teh fosters them,  
 Makes them grow, develops them,  
 Gives them a harbour, a place to dwell in peace,  
 Feeds them and shelters them.

It gives them birth and does not own them,  
 Acts (helps) and does not appropriate them,  
 Is superior, and does not control them.  
 —This is the Mystic Virtue.

## LII. STEALING THE ABSOLUTE

There was a beginning of the universe  
 Which may be regarded as the Mother of Universe.  
 From the Mother, we may know her sons.  
 After knowing the sons, keep to the Mother.  
 Thus one's whole life may be preserved from harm.

Stop its apertures,  
 Close its doors,  
 And one's whole life is without toil.

Open its apertures,  
 Be busy about its affairs,  
 And one's whole life is beyond redemption.

He who can see the small is clear-sighted;  
 He who stays by gentility is strong.  
 Use the light,  
 And return to clear-sightedness—  
 Thus cause not yourself later distress.  
 —This is to steal the Absolute.

## LIII. BRIGANDAGE

If I were possessed of Austere Knowledge,  
 Walking on the Main Path (Tao),

I would avoid the by-paths.

The Main Path is easy to walk on,  
Yet people love the small by-paths.

The (official) courts are spic and span,  
(While) the fields go untilled,  
And the granaries are very low.  
(Yet) clad in embroidered gowns,  
And carrying fine swords,  
Surfeit with good food and drinks,  
(They are) splitting with wealth and possessions.  
—This is to lead the world towards brigandage.  
Is it not the corruption of Tao?

### LIX. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

Who is firmly established is not easily shaken.  
Who has a firm grasp does not easily let go.  
From generation to generation his ancestral sacrifices  
Shall be continued without fail.

Cultivated in the individual, Virtue will become genuine;  
Cultivated in the family, Virtue will become abundant;  
Cultivated in the village, Virtue will multiply;  
Cultivated in the state, Virtue will prosper;  
Cultivated in the world, Virtue will become universal.

Therefore:

According to (the virtue of) the individual, judge the individual;  
According to (the virtue of) the family, judge the family;  
According to (the virtue of) the village, judge the village;  
According to (the virtue of) the state, judge the state;  
According to (the virtue of) the world, judge the world.  
How do I know the world is so.  
By this.<sup>78</sup>

### LV. THE VIRTUES OF THE CHILD

Who is rich<sup>79</sup> in virtue  
Is like a child.

No poisonous insects sting him,

<sup>78</sup> From within myself; or the meaning could be very well developed in the following chapter, since the chapter division is not original.

<sup>79</sup> Lit. "thick," "heavy."

No wild beasts attack him,  
 And no birds of prey pounce upon him.  
 His bones are soft, his sinews tender, yet his grip is strong.  
 Not knowing the union of male and female, yet his organs are complete,  
 Which means his vigour is unspoiled.  
 Crying the whole day, yet his voice never runs hoarse,  
 Which means his (natural) harmony is perfect.  
 To know harmony is to be in accord with the eternal,  
 (And) to know eternity is called discerning.  
 (But) to improve upon life is called an ill-omen;  
 To let go the emotions through impulse <sup>80</sup> is called assertiveness.  
 (For) things age after reaching their prime;  
 That (assertiveness) would be against Tao.  
 And he who is against Tao perishes young.

#### LVI. BEYOND HONOUR AND DISGRACE

He who knows does not speak;  
 He who speaks does not know.  
 Fill up its apertures,  
 Close its doors,  
 Dull its edges,  
 Untie its tangles,  
 Soften its light,  
 Submerge its turmoil,  
 —This is the Mystic Unity.<sup>81</sup>

Then love and hatred cannot touch him.  
 Profit and loss cannot reach him.  
 Honour and disgrace cannot affect him.  
 Therefore is he always the honoured one of the world.

#### LVII. THE ART OF GOVERNMENT

Rule a kingdom by the Normal.  
 Fight a battle by (abnormal) tactics of surprise.<sup>82</sup>  
 Win the world by doing nothing.  
 How do I know it is so?

<sup>80</sup> *Hsin*, lit. "mind," or "heart."

<sup>81</sup> All submerged in the One.

<sup>82</sup> *Cheng*, the normal, the straight, the righteous; *ch'i*, the abnormal, the deceitful, the uprising.

Through this:—

The more prohibitions there are, the poorer the people become.  
 The more sharp weapons there are,  
 The more prevailing chaos there is in the state.  
 The more skills of technique,  
 The more cunning <sup>83</sup> things are produced.  
 The greater the number of statutes,  
 The greater the number of thieves and brigands.

Therefore the Sage says:

I do nothing and the people are reformed <sup>84</sup> of themselves.  
 I love quietude and the people are righteous of themselves.  
 I deal in no business and the people grow rich by themselves.  
 I have no desires and the people are simple and honest by themselves.

#### LVIII. LAZY GOVERNMENT

When the government is lazy and dull,  
 Its people are unspoiled;  
 When the government is efficient and smart,  
 Its people are discontented.

Disaster is the avenue of fortune,  
 (And) fortune is the concealment for disaster.  
 Who would be able to know its ultimate results?  
 (As it is), there would never be the normal,

But the normal would (immediately) revert to the deceitful, <sup>85</sup>  
 And the good revert to the sinister.  
 Thus long has mankind gone astray!

Therefore the Sage is square (has firm principles), but not cutting  
 (sharp-cornered),  
 Has integrity but does not hurt (others), <sup>86</sup>  
 Is straight, but not high-handed,  
 Bright, but not dazzling.

<sup>83</sup> *Ch'i*, same word as that used for "surprise tactics," with implied disapproval as being not proper for ruling a kingdom.

<sup>84</sup> *Hua*, touched, transformed, "civilized" by moral influence. The best explanation of "doing nothing."

<sup>85</sup> See Note 82.

<sup>86</sup> In removing corruption by artificial laws and statutes and punishments.

## LIX. BE SPARING

In managing human affairs, there is no better rule than to be sparing,<sup>87</sup>  
 To be sparing is to forestall;  
 To forestall is to be prepared and strengthened;  
 To be prepared and strengthened is to be ever-victorious;  
 To be ever-victorious is to have infinite capacity;  
 He who has infinite capacity is fit to rule a country,  
 And the Mother (principle) of a ruling country can long endure.  
 This is to be firmly rooted, to have deep strength,  
 The road to immortality and enduring vision.

## LX. RULING A BIG COUNTRY

Rule a big country as you would fry small fish.<sup>88</sup>

Who rules the world in accord with Tao  
 Would find that the spirits lose their power.  
 It is not that the spirits lose their power,  
 But that they cease to do people harm.  
 It is not (only) that they cease to do people harm,  
 The Sage (himself) also does no harm to the people.  
 When both do not do each other harm,  
 Virtue (power) flows towards them.

## LXI. BIG AND SMALL COUNTRIES

A big country (must be like) the delta low-regions,  
 Being the concourse of the world,  
 (And) the Female of the world.  
 The Female overcomes the Male by quietude,  
 And achieves the lowly position by quietude.

Therefore if a big country places itself below a small country,  
 It absorbs<sup>89</sup> the small country;  
 (And) if a small country places itself below a big country,  
 It absorbs the big country.  
 Therefore some place themselves low to absorb (others),  
 Some are (naturally) low and absorb (others).  
 What a big country wants is but to shelter others,

<sup>87</sup> Never do too much.

<sup>88</sup> Let alone, or the fish will become paste by constant turning about.

<sup>89</sup> *Ch'ü*, takes, conquers, overcomes, wins over.

And what a small country wants is but to be able to come in and be sheltered.

Thus (considering) that both may have what they want,  
A big country ought to place itself low.

## LXII. THE GOOD MAN'S TREASURE

Tao is the mysterious secret of the universe,  
The good man's treasure,  
And the bad man's refuge.

Beautiful sayings can be sold at the market,  
Noble conduct can be presented as a gift.  
Though there be bad people,  
Why reject them?

Therefore on the crowning of an emperor,  
On the appointment of the Three Ministers,  
Rather than send tributes of jade and teams of four horses,  
Send in the tribute of this Tao.

Wherein did the Ancients prize this Tao?  
Did they not say, "to search for the guilty ones and pardon them?"  
Therefore is (Tao) the treasure of the world.

## LXIII. DIFFICULT AND EASY

Accomplish do-nothing.  
Attend to no-affairs.  
Taste the flavourless.  
Whether it is big or small, many or few,  
Requite hatred with Virtue.  
Deal with the difficult while yet it is easy;  
Deal with the big while yet it is small.  
The difficult (problems) of the world  
Must be dealt with while they are yet easy;  
The great (problems) of the world  
Must be dealt with while they are yet small.  
Therefore the Sage by never dealing with great (problems)  
Accomplishes greatness.

He who lightly makes a promise  
Will find it often hard to keep his faith.  
He who makes light of many things



Will encounter many difficulties.  
 Hence even the Sage regards things as difficult,  
 And for that reason never meets with difficulties.

#### LXIV. BEGINNING AND END

That which lies still is easy to hold;  
 That which is not yet manifest is easy to forestall;  
 That which is brittle (like ice) is easy to melt;  
 That which is minute is easy to scatter.  
 Deal with a thing before it is there;  
 Check disorder before it is rife.  
 A tree with a full span's girth begins from a tiny sprout;  
 A nine-storied terrace begins with a clod of earth.  
 A journey of a thousand *li* begins at one's feet.

He who acts, spoils;  
 He who grasps, lets slip.  
 Because the Sage does not act, he does not spoil,  
 Because he does not grasp, he does not let slip.  
 The affairs of men are often spoiled within an ace of completion,  
 By being careful at the end as at the beginning  
 Failure is averted.

Therefore the Sage desires to have no desire,  
 And values not objects difficult to obtain.  
 Learns that which is unlearned,  
 And restores what the multitude have lost.  
 That he may assist in the course of Nature  
 And not presume to interfere.

#### LXV. THE GRAND HARMONY

The Ancients who knew how to follow the Tao  
 Aimed not to enlighten the people,  
 But to keep them ignorant.  
 The reason it is difficult for the people to live in peace  
 Is because of too much knowledge.  
 Those who seek to rule a country by knowledge  
 Are the nation's curse.  
 Those who seek not to rule a country by knowledge  
 Are the nation's blessing.

Those who know these two (principles)  
 Also know the Ancient Standard,  
 And to know always the Ancient Standard  
 Is called the Mystic Virtue.  
 When the Mystic Virtue becomes clear, far-reaching,  
 And things revert back (to their source),  
 Then and then only emerges the Grand Harmony.

#### LXVI. THE LORDS OF THE RAVINES

How did the great rivers and seas become the Lords of the Ravines?  
 By being good at keeping low.  
 That was how they became the Lords of the Ravines.<sup>90</sup>  
 Therefore in order to be the chief among the people,  
 One must speak like their inferiors.  
 In order to be foremost among the people,  
 One must walk behind them.  
 Thus it is that the Sage stays above,  
 And the people do not feel his weight;  
 Walks in front,  
 And the people do not wish him harm.  
 Then the people of the world are glad to uphold him forever.  
 Because he does not contend,  
 No one in the world can contend against him.

#### LXVII. THE THREE TREASURES

All the world says: my teaching (Tao) greatly resembles folly.  
 Because it is great; therefore it resembles folly.  
 If it did not resemble folly,  
 It would have long ago become petty indeed!

I have Three Treasures;  
 Guard them and keep them safe:  
 The first is Love.<sup>91</sup>  
 The second is, Never too much.<sup>92</sup>  
 The third is, Never be the first in the world.  
 Through Love, one has no fear;  
 Through not doing too much, one has amplitude (of reserve power);

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>91</sup> *Ts'è*, tender love (associated with the mother).

<sup>92</sup> *Chien*, lit. "frugality," "be sparing"; see Chapter 59.

Through not presuming to be the first in the world,  
One can develop one's talent and let it mature.

If one forsakes love and fearlessness,  
    forsakes restraint and reserve power,  
    forsakes following behind and rushes in front,  
He is dead!

For love is victorious in attack,  
    And invulnerable in defence.<sup>93</sup>  
Heaven arms with love  
    Those it would not see destroyed.

### LXVIII. THE VIRTUE OF NOT-CONTENDING

The brave soldier is not violent;  
The good fighter does not lose his temper;  
The great conqueror does not fight (on small issues);  
The good user of men places himself below others.  
—This is the Virtue of not-contending,  
    Is called the capacity to use men,  
    Is reaching to the height of being  
    Mated to Heaven, to what was of old.

### LXIX. CAMOUFLAGE

There is the maxim of military strategists;  
    I dare not be the first to invade, but rather be the invaded.<sup>94</sup>  
    Dare not press forward an inch, but rather retreat a foot.  
That is, to march without formations,  
    To roll not up the sleeves,  
    To charge not in frontal attacks,  
    To arm without weapons.<sup>95</sup>  
There is no greater catastrophe than to underestimate an enemy.  
To underestimate the enemy might entail the loss of my treasures.<sup>96</sup>  
    Therefore when two equally matched armies meet,  
It is the man of sorrow<sup>97</sup> who wins.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapters 31, 69.

<sup>94</sup> *Invader* and *invaded*, lit. "host" and "guest." It is possible to read it differently by supplying the often dropped *when*: "When I dare not be the invader, then I will be the defender."

<sup>95</sup> Or to feel like being in this condition, i.e., the subjective condition of humility. This is entirely consistent with Laotse's philosophy of camouflage, the earliest in the world. Cf. "great eloquence is like stuttering," etc., Ch. 45.

<sup>96</sup> Possibly the "three Treasures" in Ch. 67.

<sup>97</sup> Who hates killing. See Ch. 31. The corrected text of Yu Yüeh would make this read, "The man who yields wins."

## LXX. THEY KNOW ME NOT

My teachings are very easy to understand and very easy to practise,  
But no one can understand them and no one can practise them.

In my words there is a principle.

In the affairs of men there is a system.

Because they know not these,

They also know me not.

Since there are few that know me,

Therefore I am distinguished.

Therefore the Sage wears a coarse cloth on top

And carries jade within his bosom.

## LXXI. SICK-MINDEDNESS

Who knows that he does not know is the highest;

Who (pretends to) know what he does not know is sick-minded.

And who recognizes sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness is not sick-minded.

The Sage is not sick-minded.

Because he recognizes sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness,

Therefore he is not sick-minded.

LXXII. ON PUNISHMENT (1)<sup>98</sup>

When people have no fear of force,<sup>99</sup>

Then (as is the common practice) great force descends upon them.

Despise not their dwellings,

Dislike not their progeny.

Because you do not dislike them,

You will not be disliked yourself.

Therefore the Sage knows himself, but does not show himself,

Loves himself, but does not exalt himself.

Therefore he rejects the one (force) and accepts the other (gentility).

## LXXIII. ON PUNISHMENT (2)

Who is brave in daring (you) kill,

Who is brave in not daring (you) let live.

<sup>98</sup> Chapters 72, 73, 74 and 75 are closely related in thought and similar in construction.

<sup>99</sup> *Wei*, military force or authority; sometimes also used in connection with "God's anger." Another interpretation, "when the people have no fear of God, then God's anger descends upon them." But this fits in not so well with the context. See next two chapters on the futility of punishment, especially the first two lines, Ch. 74.

In these two,  
 There is some advantage and some disadvantage.  
 (Even if) Heaven dislikes certain people,  
 Who would know (who are to be killed and) why?  
 Therefore even the Sage regards it as a difficult question.  
 Heaven's Way (Tao) is good at conquest without strife,  
 Rewarding (vice and virtue) without words,  
 Making its appearance without call,  
 Achieving results without obvious design.  
 The Heaven's Net is broad and wide,<sup>100</sup>  
 With big meshes, yet letting nothing slip through.

## LXXIV. ON PUNISHMENT (3)

The people are not afraid of death;  
 Why threaten them with death?  
 Supposing that the people *are* afraid of death,  
 And we can seize and kill the unruly,  
 Who would dare to do so? <sup>101</sup>  
 Often it happens that the executioner is killed.  
 And to take the place of the executioner  
 Is like handling the hatchet for the master carpenter.  
 He who handles the hatchet for the master carpenter  
 Seldom escapes injury to his hands.

## LXXV. ON PUNISHMENT (4)

When people are hungry,  
 It is because their rulers eat too much tax-grain.  
 Therefore the unruliness of hungry people  
 Is due to the interference of their rulers.  
 That is why they are unruly.  
 The people are not afraid of death,  
 Because they are anxious to make a living.  
 That is why they are not afraid of death.  
 It is those who interfere not with their living  
 That are wise in exalting life.

<sup>100</sup> This has now become a Chinese proverb for "virtue always rewarded, vice always punished."

<sup>101</sup> Notice the similarity of construction with the first five lines of Chapter 73.

## LXXVI. HARD AND SOFT

When man is born, he is tender and weak;  
 At death, he is hard and stiff.  
 When the things and plants are alive, they are soft and supple;  
 When they are dead, they are brittle and dry.  
 Therefore hardness and stiffness are the companions of death,  
 And softness and gentleness are the companions of life.

Therefore when an army is headstrong,<sup>102</sup> it will lose in battle.  
 When a tree is hard, it will be cut down.  
 The big and strong belong underneath.  
 The gentle and weak belong at the top.<sup>103</sup>

## LXXVII. BENDING THE BOW

The Tao (way) of Heaven,  
 Is it not like the bending of a bow?  
 The top comes down and the bottom-end goes up,  
 The extra (length) is shortened, the insufficient (width) is expanded.  
 It is the Way of Heaven to take away from those that have too much  
 And give to those that have not enough.  
 Not so with man's way:  
 He takes away from those that have not  
 And gives it as tribute to those that have too much.  
 Who can have enough and to spare to give to the entire world?  
 Only the man of Tao.  
 Therefore the Sage acts, but does not possess,  
 Accomplishes but lays claim to no credit,  
 Because he has no wish to seem superior.

## LXXVIII. NOTHING WEAKER THAN WATER

There is nothing weaker than water  
 But none is superior to it in overcoming the hard,  
 For which there is no substitute.  
 That weakness overcomes strength  
 And gentleness overcomes rigidity,  
 No one does not know;  
 No one can put into practice.

<sup>102</sup> *Ch'iang* means "stiff," "strong," and "headstrong."

<sup>103</sup> As with twigs and trunks.

Therefore the Sage says:

“Who receives unto himself the calumny of the world  
Is the preserver of the state.  
Who bears himself the sins of the world  
Is the king of the world.”

Straight words seem crooked.

## LXXIX. PEACE SETTLEMENTS

Patching up a great hatred is sure to leave some hatred behind.  
How can this be regarded as satisfactory?  
Therefore the Sage holds the left tally,<sup>104</sup>  
And does not put the guilt on the other party.  
The virtuous man is for patching up;  
The vicious is for fixing guilt.<sup>105</sup>  
But “the way of Heaven is impartial  
It sides only with the good man.”<sup>106</sup>

## LXXX. THE SMALL UTOPIA

(Let there be) a small country with a small population,  
Where the supply of goods are tenfold or hundredfold, more than they  
can use.  
Let the people value their lives <sup>107</sup> and not migrate far.  
Though there be boats and carriages,  
None be there to ride them.  
Though there be armour and weapons,  
No occasion to display them.  
Let the people again tie ropes for reckoning,  
Let them enjoy their food,  
Beautify their clothing,  
Be satisfied with their homes,  
Delight in their customs.  
The neighbouring settlements overlook one another  
So that they can hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks of their  
neighbours,  
And the people till the end of their days shall never have been outside  
their country.

<sup>104</sup> Sign of inferiority in an agreement.

<sup>105</sup> Wang Pi's commentary: “for pointing out faults.”

<sup>106</sup> An ancient quotation appearing in many ancient texts.

<sup>107</sup> Lit. “death.”

## LXXXI. THE WAY OF HEAVEN

True words are not fine-sounding;  
Fine-sounding words are not true.  
A good man does not argue;  
He who argues is not a good man.  
The wise one does not know many things;  
He who knows many things is not wise.  
The Sage does not accumulate (for himself):  
He lives for other people,  
And grows richer himself;  
He gives to other people,  
And has greater abundance.  
The Tao of Heaven  
Blesses, but does not harm.  
The Way of the Sage  
Accomplishes, but does not contend.



# Chuangtse, Mystic and Humorist

## INTRODUCTION

JESUS WAS FOLLOWED BY ST. PAUL, Socrates by Plato, Confucius by Mencius, and Laotse by Chuangtse. In all four cases, the first was the real teacher and either wrote no books or wrote very little, and the second began to develop the doctrines and wrote long and profound discourses. Chuangtse, who died about 275 B.C., was separated from Laotse's death by not quite two hundred years, and was strictly a contemporary of Mencius. Yet the most curious thing is that although both these writers mentioned the other philosophers of the time, neither was mentioned by the other in his works.

On the whole, Chuangtse must be considered the greatest prose writer of the Chou Dynasty, as Ch'ü Yüan must be considered the greatest poet. His claim to this position rests both upon the brilliance of his style and the depth of his thought. That explains the fact that although he was probably the greatest slanderer of Confucius, and with Motse, the greatest antagonist of Confucian ideas, no Confucian scholar has not openly or secretly admired him. People who would not openly agree with his ideas would nevertheless read him as literature.

Nor can it be said truly that a pure-blooded Chinese could ever quite disagree with Chuangtse's ideas. Taoism is not a school of thought in China, it is a deep, fundamental trait of Chinese thinking, and of the Chinese attitude toward life and toward society. It has depth, while Confucianism has only a practical sense of proportions; it enriches Chinese poetry and imagination in an immeasurable manner, and it gives a philosophic sanction to whatever is in the idle, freedom-loving, poetic, vagabond Chinese soul. It provides the only safe, romantic release from the severe Confucian classic restraint, and humanizes the very humanists

themselves. Therefore when a Chinese succeeds, he is always a Confucianist, and when he fails, he is always a Taoist. As more people fail than succeed in this world, and as all who succeed know that they succeed but in a lame and halting manner when they examine themselves in the dark hours of the night, I believe Taoist ideas are more often at work than Confucianism. Even a Confucianist succeeds only when he knows he never really succeeds, that is, by following Taoist wisdom. Tseng Kuofan, the great Confucian general who suppressed the Taiping Rebellion, had failed in his early campaign and began to succeed only one morning when he realized with true Taoist humility that he was "no good," and gave power to his assistant generals.

Chuangtse is therefore important as the first one who fully developed the Taoistic thesis of the rhythm of life, contained in the epigrams of Laotse. Unlike other Chinese philosophers principally occupied with practical questions of government and personal morality, he gives the only metaphysics existing in Chinese literature before the coming of Buddhism. I am sure his mysticism will charm some readers and repel others. Certain traits in it, like weeding out the idea of the ego and quiet contemplation and "seeing the Solitary" explain how these native Chinese ideas were back of the development of the Ch'an (Japanese *Zen*) Buddhism. Any branch of human knowledge, even the study of the rocks of the earth and the cosmic rays of heaven, strikes mysticism when it reaches any depth at all, and it seems Chinese Taoism skipped the scientific study of nature to reach the same intuitive conclusion by insight alone. Therefore it is not surprising that Albert Einstein and Chuangtse agree, as agree they must, on the relativity of all standards. The only difference is that Einstein takes on the more difficult and, to a Chinese, more stupid work of mathematical proof, while Chuangtse furnishes the philosophic import of this theory of relativity, which must be sooner or later developed by Western philosophers in the next decades.

A word must be added about Chuangtse's attitude toward Confucius. It will be evident to any reader that he was one of the greatest romanticizers of history, and that any of the anecdotes he tells about Confucius, or Laotse or the Yellow Emperor must be accepted on a par with those anecdotes he tells about the conversation of General Clouds and Great Nebulous, or between the Spirit of the River and the Spirit of the Ocean. It must be also plainly understood that he was a humorist with a wild and rather luxuriant fantasy, with an American love for exaggeration and for the big. One should therefore read him as one would a humorist writer, knowing that he is frivolous when he is profound and profound when he is frivolous.

The extant text of Chuangtse consists of thirty-three chapters, all of

them a mixture of philosophic disquisition and anecdotes or parables. The chapters containing the most virulent attacks on Confucianism (not included here) have been considered forgery, and a few Chinese "textual critics" have even considered all of them forgery except the first seven chapters. This is easy to understand because it is the modern Chinese fashion to talk of forgery. One can rest assured that these "textual critics" are unscientific because very little of it is philological criticism, but consists of opinions as to style and whether Chuangtse had or had not enough culture to attack Confucius only in a mild and polished manner. (See samples of this type of "criticism" in my long introduction to *The Book of History*.) Only one or two anachronisms are pointed out, which could be due to later interpolations and the rest is a subjective assertion of opinion. Even the evaluations of style are faulty, and at least a distinction should be made between interpolations and wholesale forgery. Some of the best pieces of Chuangtse are decidedly outside the first seven chapters, and it has not even occurred to the critics to provide an answer as to who else could have written them. There is no reason to be sure that even the most eloquent exposition of the thieves' philosophy, regarded by most as forgery, was not the work of Chuangtse, who had so little to do with the "gentlemen." On the other hand, I believe various anecdotes have been freely added by later generations into the extremely loose structure of the chapters.

I have chosen here eleven chapters, including all but one of the first best seven chapters. With one minor exception, these chapters are translated complete. The philosophically most important are the chapters on "Levelling All Things" and "Autumn Floods." The chapters, "Joined Toes," "Horses' Hoofs," "Opening Trunks" and "Tolerance" belong in one group with the main theme of protest against civilization. The most eloquent protest is contained in "Opening Trunks," while the most characteristically Taoistic is the chapter on "Tolerance." The most mystic and deeply religious piece is "The Great Supreme." The most beautifully written is "Autumn Floods." The queerest is the chapter on "Deformities" (a typically "romanticist" theme). The most delightful is probably "Horses' Hoofs," and the most fantastic is the first chapter, "A Happy Excursion." Some of Chuangtse's parables in the other chapters will be found under "Parables of Ancient Philosophers" elsewhere in this volume.

I have based my translation on that of Herbert A. Giles. It soon became apparent in my work that Giles was free in his translation where exactness was easy and possible, and that he had a glib, colloquial style which might be considered a blemish. The result is that hardly a line has been left untouched, and I have had to make my own translation,

taking advantage of whatever is good in his English rendering. But still I owe a great debt to my predecessor, and he has notably succeeded in this difficult task in many passages. Where his rendering is good, I have not chosen to be different. In this sense, the translation may be regarded as my own.

It should be noted that throughout the text, Giles translates "Heaven" as "God" where it means God. On the other hand, the term "Creator" is an exact rendering of *chao-wu*, or "he who creates things." I will not go into details of translation of other philosophic terms here.

# Chuangtse

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

## A HAPPY EXCURSION (CHAPTER I)

IN THE NORTHERN OCEAN there is a fish, called the *k'un*, I do not know how many thousand *li* in size. This *k'un* changes into a bird, called the *p'eng*. Its back is I do not know how many thousand *li* in breadth. When it is moved, it flies, its wings obscuring the sky like clouds.

When on a voyage, this bird prepares to start for the Southern Ocean, the Celestial Lake. And in the *Records of Marvels* we read that when the *p'eng* flies southwards, the water is smitten for a space of three thousand *li* around, while the bird itself mounts upon a great wind to a height of ninety thousand *li*, for a flight of six months' duration.

There mounting aloft, the bird saw the moving white mists of spring, the dust-clouds, and the living things blowing their breaths among them. It wondered whether the blue of the sky was its real colour, or only the result of distance without end, and saw that the things on earth appeared the same to it.

If there is not sufficient depth, water will not float large ships. Upset a cupful into a hole in the yard, and a mustard-seed will be your boat. Try to float the cup, and it will be grounded, due to the disproportion between water and vessel.

So with air. If there is not sufficient a depth, it cannot support large wings. And for this bird, a depth of ninety thousand *li* is necessary to bear it up. Then, gliding upon the wind, with nothing save the clear sky above, and no obstacles in the way, it starts upon its journey to the south.

A cicada and a young dove laughed, saying, "Now, when I fly with all my might, 'tis as much as I can do to get from tree to tree. And sometimes I do not reach, but fall to the ground midway. What then can be the use of going up ninety thousand *li* to start for the south?"

He who goes to the countryside taking three meals with him comes back with his stomach as full as when he started. But he who travels a hundred *li* must take ground rice enough for an overnight stay. And he who travels a thousand *li* must supply himself with provisions for three months. Those two little creatures, what should they know?

Small knowledge has not the compass of great knowledge any more than a short year has the length of a long year. How can we tell that this is so? The fungus plant of a morning knows not the alternation of day and night. The cicada knows not the alternation of spring and autumn. Theirs are short years. But in the south of Ch'u there is a *mingling* (tree) whose spring and autumn are each of five hundred years' duration. And in former days there was a large tree which had a spring and autumn each of eight thousand years. Yet, P'eng Tsu<sup>1</sup> is known for reaching a great age and is still, alas! an object of envy to all!

It was on this very subject that the Emperor T'ang<sup>2</sup> spoke to Chi, as follows: "At the north of Ch'iungta, there is a Dark Sea, the Celestial Lake. In it there is a fish several thousand *li* in breadth, and I know not how many in length. It is called the *k'un*. There is also a bird, called the *p'eng*, with a back like Mount T'ai, and wings like clouds across the sky. It soars up upon a whirlwind to a height of ninety thousand *li*, far above the region of the clouds, with only the clear sky above it. And then it directs its flight towards the Southern Ocean.

"And a lake sparrow laughed, and said: Pray, what may that creature be going to do? I rise but a few yards in the air and settle down again, after flying around among the reeds. That is as much as any one would want to fly. Now, wherever can this creature be going to?"

Such, indeed, is the difference between small and great. Take, for instance, a man who creditably fills some small office, or whose influence spreads over a village, or whose character pleases a certain prince. His opinion of himself will be much the same as that lake sparrow's. The philosopher Yung of Sung would laugh at such a one. If the whole world flattered him, he would not be affected thereby, nor if the whole world blamed him would he be dissuaded from what he was doing. For Yung can distinguish between essence and superficialities, and understand what is true honour and shame. Such men are rare in their generation. But even he has not established himself.

Now Lichtse<sup>3</sup> could ride upon the wind. Sailing happily in the cool breeze, he would go on for fifteen days before his return. Among mortals who attain happiness, such a man is rare. Yet although Lichtse could

<sup>1</sup> He is reputed to have lived 800 years.

<sup>2</sup> 1783 B.C.

<sup>3</sup> Philosopher about whose life nothing is known. The book *Lichtse* is considered a later compilation. See the section "Parables of Ancient Philosophers."

dispense with walking, he would still have to depend upon something.<sup>4</sup> As for one who is charioted upon the eternal fitness of Heaven and Earth, driving before him the changing elements as his team to roam through the realms of the Infinite, upon what, then, would such a one have need to depend?

Thus it is said, "The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores achievement; the true Sage ignores reputation."

The Emperor Yao<sup>5</sup> wished to abdicate in favour of Hsü Yu, saying, "If, when the sun and moon are shining, the torch is still lighted, would it be not difficult for the latter to shine? If, when the rain has fallen, one should still continue to water the fields, would this not be a waste of labour? Now if you would assume the reins of government, the empire would be well governed, and yet I am filling this office. I am conscious of my own deficiencies, and I beg to offer you the Empire."

"You are ruling the Empire, and the Empire is already well ruled," replied Hsü Yu. "Why should I take your place? Should I do this for the sake of a name? A name is but the shadow of reality, and should I trouble myself about the shadow? The tit, building its nest in the mighty forest, occupies but a single twig. The beaver slakes its thirst from the river, but drinks enough only to fill its belly. I would rather go back: I have no use for the empire! If the cook is unable to prepare the funeral sacrifices, the representative of the worshipped spirit and the officer of prayer may not step over the wines and meats and do it for him."

Chien Wu said to Lien Shu, "I heard Chieh Yü talk on high and fine subjects endlessly. I was greatly startled at what he said, for his words seemed interminable as the Milky Way, but they are quite detached from our common human experience."

"What was it?" asked Lien Shu.

"He declared," replied Chien Wu, "that on the Miao-ku-yi mountain there lives a divine one, whose skin is white like ice or snow, whose grace and elegance are like those of a virgin, who eats no grain, but lives on air and dew, and who, riding on clouds with flying dragons for his team, roams beyond the limits of the mortal regions. When his spirit gravitates, he can ward off corruption from all things, and bring good crops. That is why I call it nonsense, and do not believe it."

"Well," answered Lien Shu, "you don't ask a blind man's opinion of beautiful designs, nor do you invite a deaf man to a concert. And

<sup>4</sup> The wind.

<sup>5</sup> 2337 B.C.

blindness and deafness are not physical only. There is blindness and deafness of the mind. His words are like the unspoiled virgin. The good influence of such a man with such a character fills all creation. Yet because a paltry generation cries for reform, you would have him busy himself about the details of an empire!

"Objective existences cannot harm. In a flood which reached the sky, he would not be drowned. In a drought, though metals ran liquid and mountains were scorched up, he would not be hot. Out of his very dust and siftings you might fashion two such men as Yao and Shun.<sup>6</sup> And you would have him occupy himself with objectives!"

A man of the Sung State carried some ceremonial caps to the Yüeh tribes for sale. But the men of Yüeh used to cut off their hair and paint their bodies, so that they had no use for such things. The Emperor Yao ruled all under heaven and governed the affairs of the entire country. After he paid a visit to the four sages of the Miao-ku-yi Mountain, he felt on his return to his capital at Fenyang that the empire existed for him no more.

Hueitse<sup>7</sup> said to Chuangtse, "The Prince of Wei gave me a seed of a large-sized kind of gourd. I planted it, and it bore a fruit as big as a five-bushel measure. Now had I used this for holding liquids, it would have been too heavy to lift; and had I cut it in half for ladles, the ladles would have been too flat for such purpose. Certainly it was a huge thing, but I had no use for it and so broke it up."

"It was rather you did not know how to use large things," replied Chuangtse. "There was a man of Sung who had a recipe for salve for chapped hands, his family having been silk-washers for generations. A stranger who had heard of it came and offered him a hundred ounces of silver for this recipe; whereupon he called together his clansmen and said, 'We have never made much money by silk-washing. Now, we can sell the recipe for a hundred ounces in a single day. Let the stranger have it.'

"The stranger got the recipe, and went and had an interview with the Prince of Wu. The Yüeh State was in trouble, and the Prince of Wu sent a general to fight a naval battle with Yüeh at the beginning of winter. The latter was totally defeated, and the stranger was rewarded with a piece of the King's territory. Thus, while the efficacy of the salve to cure chapped hands was in both cases the same, its applications were different. Here, it secured a title; there, the people remained silk-washers.

"Now as to your five-bushel gourd, why did you not make a float of

<sup>6</sup> Sage emperors.

<sup>7</sup> A sophist and friend of Chuangtse who often carried on debates with him.



it, and float about over river and lake? And you complain of its being too flat for holding things! I fear your mind is stuffy inside."

Hueitse said to Chuangtse, "I have a large tree, called the ailanthus. Its trunk is so irregular and knotty that it cannot be measured out for planks; while its branches are so twisted that they cannot be cut out into discs or squares. It stands by the roadside, but no carpenter will look at it. Your words are like that tree—big and useless, of no concern to the world."

"Have you never seen a wild cat," rejoined Chuangtse, "crouching down in wait for its prey? Right and left and high and low, it springs about, until it gets caught in a trap or dies in a snare. On the other hand, there is the yak with its great huge body. It is big enough in all conscience, but it cannot catch mice. Now if you have a big tree and are at a loss what to do with it, why not plant it in the Village of Nowhere, in the great wilds, where you might loiter idly by its side, and lie down in blissful repose beneath its shade? There it would be safe from the axe and from all other injury. For being of no use to others, what could worry its mind?"

### ON LEVELLING ALL THINGS

TSECH'I OF NANKUO sat leaning on a low table. Gazing up to heaven, he sighed and looked as though he had lost his mind.

Yench'eng Tseyu, who was standing by him, exclaimed, "What are you thinking about that your body should become thus like dead wood, your mind like burnt-out cinders? Surely the man now leaning on the table is not he who was here just now."

"My friend," replied Tsech'i, "your question is apposite. Today I have lost my Self. . . . Do you understand? . . . Perhaps you only know the music of man, and not that of Earth. Or even if you have heard the music of Earth, perhaps you have not heard the music of Heaven."

"Pray explain," said Tseyu.

"The breath of the universe," continued Tsech'i, "is called wind. At times, it is inactive. But when active, all crevices resound to its blast. Have you never listened to its deafening roar?"

"Caves and dells of hill and forest, hollows in huge trees of many a span in girth—some are like nostrils, and some like mouths, and others like ears, beam-sockets, goblets, mortars, or like pools and poodles. And the wind goes rushing through them, like swirling torrents or singing arrows, bellowing, sousing, trilling, wailing, roaring, purling, whistling in front and echoing behind, now soft with the cool blow, now shrill with the whirlwind, until the tempest is past and silence reigns supreme.

Have you never witnessed how the trees and objects shake and quake, and twist and twirl?"

"Well, then," enquired Tseyu, "since the music of Earth consists of hollows and apertures, and the music of man of pipes and flutes, of what consists the music of Heaven?"

"The effect of the wind upon these various apertures," replied Tsech'i, "is not uniform, but the sounds are produced according to their individual capacities. Who is it that agitates their breasts?"

"Great wisdom is generous; petty wisdom is contentious. Great speech is impassioned, small speech cantankerous.

"For whether the soul is locked in sleep or whether in waking hours the body moves, we are striving and struggling with the immediate circumstances. Some are easy-going and leisurely, some are deep and cunning, and some are secretive. Now we are frightened over petty fears, now disheartened and dismayed over some great terror. Now the mind flies forth like an arrow from a cross-bow, to be the arbiter of right and wrong. Now it stays behind as if sworn to an oath, to hold on to what it has secured. Then, as under autumn and winter's blight, comes gradual decay, and submerged in its own occupations, it keeps on running its course, never to return. Finally, worn out and imprisoned, it is choked up like an old drain, and the failing mind shall not see light again.<sup>8</sup>

"Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, worries and regrets, indecision and fears, come upon us by turns, with everchanging moods, like music from the hollows, or like mushrooms from damp. Day and night they alternate within us, but we cannot tell whence they spring. Alas! Alas! Could we for a moment lay our finger upon their very Cause?

"But for these emotions I should not be. Yet but for me, there would be no one to feel them. So far we can go; but we do not know by whose order they come into play. It would seem there was a soul; <sup>9</sup> but the clue to its existence is wanting. That it functions is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. Perhaps it has inner reality without outward form.

"Take the human body with all its hundred bones, nine external cavities and six internal organs, all complete. Which part of it should I love best? Do you not cherish all equally, or have you a preference? Do these organs serve as servants of someone else? Since servants cannot govern themselves, do they serve as master and servants by turn? Surely there is some soul which controls them all.

"But whether or not we ascertain what is the true nature of this soul,

<sup>8</sup> Agitations of the soul (music of Heaven) compared to the agitations of the forest (music of Earth).

<sup>9</sup> Lit. "true lord."

it matters but little to the soul itself. For once coming into this material shape, it runs its course until it is exhausted. To be harassed by the wear and tear of life, and to be driven along without possibility of arresting one's course,—is not this pitiful indeed? To labour without ceasing all life, and then, without living to enjoy the fruit, worn out with labour, to depart, one knows not whither,—is not this a just cause for grief?"

"Men say there is no death—of what avail? The body decomposes, and the mind goes with it. Is this not a great cause for sorrow? Can the world be so dull as not to see this? Or is it I alone who am dull, and others not so?"

Now if we are to be guided by our prejudices, who shall be without a guide? What need to make comparisons of right and wrong with others? And if one is to follow one's own judgments according to his prejudices, even the fools have them! But to form judgments of right and wrong without first having a mind at all is like saying, "I left for Yüeh today, and got there yesterday." Or, it is like assuming something which does not exist to exist. The (illusions of) assuming something which does not exist to exist could not be fathomed even by the divine Yü ; how much less could we?

For speech is not mere blowing of breath. It is intended to say something, only what it is intended to say cannot yet be determined. Is there speech indeed, or is there not? Can we, or can we not, distinguish it from the chirping of young birds?

How can Tao be obscured so that there should be a distinction of true and false? How can speech be so obscured that there should be a distinction of right and wrong? <sup>10</sup> Where can you go and find Tao not to exist? Where can you go and find that words cannot be proved? Tao is obscured by our inadequate understanding, and words are obscured by flowery expressions. Hence the affirmations and denials of the Confucian and Motsean <sup>11</sup> schools, each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies. Each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies brings us only into confusion.

There is nothing which is not *this*; there is nothing which is not *that*. What cannot be seen by *that* (the other person) can be known by myself. Hence I say, *this* emanates from *that*; *that* also derives from *this*. This is the theory of the interdependence of *this* and *that* (relativity of standards).

<sup>10</sup> *Shih* and *fei* mean general moral judgments and mental distinctions: "right" and "wrong," "true" and "false," "is" and "is not," "affirmative" and "negative," also "to justify" and "condemn," to "affirm" and "deny."

<sup>11</sup> The followers of Motse were powerful rivals of the Confucianists in Chuangtse's days. See the selections from Motse.

Nevertheless, life arises from death, and *vice versa*. Possibility arises from impossibility, and *vice versa*. Affirmation is based upon denial, and *vice versa*. Which being the case, the true sage rejects all distinctions and takes his refuge in Heaven (Nature). For one may base it on *this*, yet *this* is also *that* and *that* is also *this*. *This* also has its 'right' and 'wrong', and *that* also has its 'right' and 'wrong.' Does then the distinction between *this* and *that* really exist or not? When *this* (subjective) and *that* (objective) are both without their correlates, that is the very 'Axis of Tao.' And when that Axis passes through the centre at which all Infinities converge, affirmations and denials alike blend into the infinite One. Hence it is said that there is nothing like using the Light.

To take a finger in illustration of a finger not being a finger is not so good as to take something which is not a finger to illustrate that a finger is not a finger. To take a horse in illustration of a horse not being a horse is not so good as to take something which is not a horse to illustrate that a horse is not a horse.<sup>12</sup> So with the universe which is but a finger, but a horse. The possible is possible: the impossible is impossible. Tao operates, and the given results follow; things receive names and are said to be what they are. Why are they so? They are said to be so! Why are they not so? They are said to be not so! Things are so by themselves and have possibilities by themselves. There is nothing which is not so and there is nothing which may not become so.

Therefore take, for instance, a twig and a pillar, or the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations. These are all levelled together by Tao. Division is the same as creation; creation is the same as destruction. There is no such thing as creation or destruction, for these conditions are again levelled together into One.

Only the truly intelligent understand this principle of the levelling of all things into One. They discard the distinctions and take refuge in the common and ordinary things. The common and ordinary things serve certain functions and therefore retain the wholeness of nature. From this wholeness, one comprehends, and from comprehension, one comes near to the Tao. There it stops. To stop without knowing how it stops—this is Tao.

But to wear out one's intellect in an obstinate adherence to the individuality of things, not recognizing the fact that all things are One,—that is called "Three in the Morning." What is "Three in the Morning?" A keeper of monkeys said with regard to their rations of nuts that each monkey was to have three in the morning and four at night. At this the monkeys were very angry. Then the keeper said they might have four

<sup>12</sup> The meaning of these two sentences is made clear by a line below. "But if we put the different categories in one, then the differences of category cease to exist."

in the morning and three at night, with which arrangement they were all well pleased. The actual number of nuts remained the same, but there was a difference owing to (subjective evaluations of) likes and dislikes. It also derives from this (principle of subjectivity). Wherefore the true Sage brings all the contraries together and rests in the natural Balance of Heaven. This is called (the principle of following) two courses (at once).

The knowledge of the men of old had a limit. When was the limit? It extended back to a period when matter did not exist. That was the extreme point to which their knowledge reached. The second period was that of matter, but of matter unconditioned (undefined). The third epoch saw matter conditioned (defined), but judgments of true and false were still unknown. When these appeared, Tao began to decline. And with the decline of Tao, individual bias (subjectivity) arose.

Besides, did Tao really rise and decline? <sup>13</sup> In the world of (apparent) rise and decline, the famous musician Chao Wen did play the string instrument; but in respect to the world without rise and decline, Chao Wen did not play the string instrument. When Chao Wen stopped playing the string instrument, Shih K'uang (the music master) laid down his drum-stick (for keeping time), and Hueitse (the sophist) stopped arguing, they all understood the approach of Tao. These people are the best in their arts, and therefore known to posterity. They each loved his art, and wanted to excel in his own line. And because they loved their arts, they wanted to make them known to others. But they were trying to teach what (in its nature) could not be known. Consequently (Hueitse) ended in the obscure discussions of the "hard" and "white"; and Chao Wen's son tried to learn to play the string instrument all his life and failed. If this may be called success, then I, too, have succeeded. But if neither of them could be said to have succeeded, then neither I nor others have succeeded. Therefore the true Sage discards the light that dazzles and takes refuge in the common and ordinary. Through this comes understanding.

Suppose here is a statement. We do not know whether it belongs to one category or another. But if we put the different categories in one, then the differences of category cease to exist. However, I must explain. If there was a beginning, then there was a time before that beginning, and a time before the time which was before the time of that beginning.

<sup>13</sup> *Ch'eng* and *k'uei*, lit. "whole" and "deficient." "Wholeness" refers to unspoiled unity of Tao. In the following sentences, *ch'eng* is used in the sense of "success." It is explained by commentators that the "wholeness" of music exists only in silence, and that as soon as one note is struck, other notes are necessarily held in abeyance. The same thing is true of arguments: when we argue, we necessarily cut up truth by emphasizing certain aspects of it.

If there is existence, there must have been non-existence. And if there was a time when nothing existed, then there must have been a time when even nothing did not exist. All of a sudden, nothing came into existence. Could one then really say whether it belongs to the category of existence or of non-existence? Even the very words I have just now uttered,—I cannot say whether they say something or not.

There is nothing under the canopy of heaven greater than the tip of a bird's down in autumn, while the T'ai Mountain is small. Neither is there any longer life than that of a child cut off in infancy, while P'eng Tsu himself died young. The universe and I came into being together; I and everything therein are One.

If then all things are One, what room is there for speech? On the other hand, since I can say the word 'one' how can speech not exist? If it does exist, we have One and speech—two; and two and one—three<sup>14</sup> from which point onwards even the best mathematicians will fail to reach (the ultimate); how much more then should ordinary people fail?

Hence, if from nothing you can proceed to something, and subsequently reach there, it follows that it would be still easier if you were to start from something. Since you cannot proceed, stop here.

Now Tao by its very nature can never be defined. Speech by its very nature cannot express the absolute. Hence arise the distinctions. Such distinctions are: "right" and "left," "relationship" and "duty," "division" and "discrimination," "emulation" and "contention." These are called the Eight Predicables.

Beyond the limits of the external world, the Sage knows that it exists, but does not talk about it. Within the limits of the external world, the Sage talks but does not make comments. With regard to the wisdom of the ancients, as embodied in the canon of *Spring and Autumn*, the Sage comments, but does not expound. And thus, among distinctions made, there are distinctions that cannot be made; among things expounded, there are things that cannot be expounded.

How can that be? it is asked. The true Sage keeps his knowledge within him, while men in general set forth theirs in argument, in order to convince each other. And therefore it is said that one who argues does so because he cannot see certain points.

Now perfect Tao cannot be given a name. A perfect argument does not employ words. Perfect kindness does not concern itself with (individual acts of) kindness.<sup>15</sup> Perfect integrity is not critical of others.<sup>16</sup> Perfect courage does not push itself forward.

For the Tao which is manifest is not Tao. Speech which argues falls

<sup>14</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 42.

<sup>15</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 5.

<sup>16</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 58.

short of its aim. Kindness which has fixed objects loses its scope. Integrity which is obvious is not believed in. Courage which pushes itself forward never accomplishes anything. These five are, as it were, round (mellow) with a strong bias towards squareness (sharpness). Therefore that knowledge which stops at what it does not know, is the highest knowledge.

Who knows the argument which can be argued without words, and the Tao which does not declare itself as Tao? He who knows this may be said to enter the realm of the spirit.<sup>17</sup> To be poured into without becoming full, and pour out without becoming empty, without knowing how this is brought about,—this is the art of "Concealing the Light."

Of old, the Emperor Yao said to Shun, "I would smite the Tsungs, and the Kueis, and the Hsü-aos. Since I have been on the throne, this has ever been on my mind. What do you think?"

"These three States," replied Shun, "lie in wild undeveloped regions. Why can you not shake off this idea? Once upon a time, ten suns came out together, and all things were illuminated thereby. How much greater should be the power of virtue which excels the suns?"

Yeh Ch'üeh asked Wang Yi, saying, "Do you know for certain that all things are the same?"

"How can I know?" answered Wang Yi.

"Do you know what you do not know?"

"How can I know!" replied Yeh Ch'üeh.

"But then does nobody know?"

"How can I know?" said Wang Yi. "Nevertheless, I will try to tell you. How can it be known that what I call knowing is not really not knowing and that what I call not knowing is not really knowing? Now I would ask you this, If a man sleeps in a damp place, he gets lumbago and dies. But how about an eel? And living up in a tree is precarious and trying to the nerves. But how about monkeys? Of the man, the eel, and the monkey, whose habitat is the right one, absolutely? Human beings feed on flesh, deer on grass, centipedes on little snakes, owls and crows on mice. Of these four, whose is the right taste, absolutely? Monkey mates with the dog-headed female ape, the buck with the doe, eels consort with fishes, while men admire Mao Ch'iang and Li Chi, at the sight of whom fishes plunge deep down in the water, birds soar high in the air, and deer hurry away. Yet who shall say which is the correct standard of beauty? In my opinion, the doctrines of

<sup>17</sup> Lit. in the "Palace of Heaven."

humanity and justice and the paths of right and wrong are so confused that it is impossible to know their contentions."

"If you then," asked Yeh Ch'üeh, "do not know what is good and bad, is the Perfect Man equally without this knowledge?"

"The Perfect Man," answered Wang Yi, "is a spiritual being. Were the ocean itself scorched up, he would not feel hot. Were the great rivers frozen hard, he would not feel cold. Were the mountains to be cleft by thunder, and the great deep to be thrown up by storm, he would not tremble with fear. Thus, he would mount upon the clouds of heaven, and driving the sun and the moon before him, pass beyond the limits of this mundane existence. Death and life have no more victory over him. How much less should he concern himself with the distinctions of profit and loss?"

Chü Ch'iao addressed Ch'ang Wutse as follows: "I heard Confucius say, 'The true Sage pays no heed to worldly affairs. He neither seeks gain nor avoids injury. He asks nothing at the hands of man and does not adhere to rigid rules of conduct. Sometimes he says something without speaking and sometimes he speaks without saying anything. And so he roams beyond the limits of this mundane world. 'These,' commented Confucius, 'are futile fantasies.' But to me they are the embodiment of the most wonderful Tao. What is your opinion?"

"These are things that perplexed even the Yellow Emperor," replied Ch'ang Wutse. "How should Confucius know? You are going too far ahead. When you see a hen's egg, you already expect to hear a cock crow. When you see a sling, you are already expected to have broiled pigeon. I will say a few words to you at random, and do you listen at random.

"How does the Sage seat himself by the sun and moon, and hold the universe in his grasp? He blends everything into one harmonious whole, rejecting the confusion of this and that. Rank and precedence, which the vulgar sedulously cultivate, the Sage stolidly ignores, amalgamating the disparities of ten thousand years into one pure mould. The universe itself, too, conserves and blends all in the same manner.

"How do I know that love of life is not a delusion after all? How do I know but that he who dreads death is not as a child who has lost his way and does not know his way home?

"The Lady Li Chi was the daughter of the frontier officer of Ai. When the Duke of Chin first got her, she wept until the bosom of her dress was drenched with tears. But when she came to the royal residence, shared with the Duke his luxurious couch, and ate rich food, she repented of having wept. How then do I know but that the dead may repent of having previously clung to life?



"Those who dream of the banquet, wake to lamentation and sorrow. Those who dream of lamentation and sorrow wake to join the hunt. While they dream, they do not know that they are dreaming. Some will even interpret the very dream they are dreaming; and only when they awake do they know it was a dream. By and by comes the great awakening, and then we find out that this life is really a great dream. Fools think they are awake now, and flatter themselves they know—this one is a prince, and that one is a shepherd. What narrowness of mind! Confucius and you are both dreams; and I who say you are dreams—I am but a dream myself. This is a paradox. Tomorrow a Sage may arise to explain it; but that tomorrow will not be until ten thousand generations have gone by. Yet you may meet him around the corner.

"Granting that you and I argue. If you get the better of me, and not I of you, are you necessarily right and I wrong? Or if I get the better of you and not you of me, am I necessarily right and you wrong? Or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? You and I cannot know this, and consequently we all live in darkness.

"Whom shall I ask as arbiter between us? If I ask someone who takes your view, he will side with you. How can such a one arbitrate between us? If I ask someone who takes my view, he will side with me. How can such a one arbitrate between us? If I ask someone who differs from both of us, he will be equally unable to decide between us, since he differs from both of us. And if I ask someone who agrees with both of us, he will be equally unable to decide between us, since he agrees with both of us. Since then you and I and other men cannot decide, how can we depend upon another? The words of arguments are all relative; if we wish to reach the absolute, we must harmonize them by means of the unity of God, and follow their natural evolution, so that we may complete our allotted span of life.

"But what is it to harmonize them by means of the unity of God? It is this. The right may not be really right. What appears so may not be really so. Even if what is right is really right, wherein it differs from wrong cannot be made plain by argument. Even if what appears so is really so, wherein it differs from what is not so also cannot be made plain by argument.

"Take no heed of time nor of right and wrong. Passing into the realm of the Infinite, take your final rest therein."

The Penumbra said to the Umbra. "At one moment you move: at another you are at rest. At one moment you sit down: at another you get up. Why this instability of purpose?" "Perhaps I depend," replied

the Umbra, "upon something which causes me to do as I do; and perhaps that something depends in turn upon something else which causes it to do as it does. Or perhaps my dependence is like (the unconscious movements) of a snake's scales or of a cicada's wings. How can I tell why I do one thing, or why I do not do another?"

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou,<sup>18</sup> dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things.<sup>19</sup>

### THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE

HUMAN LIFE is limited, but knowledge is limitless. To drive the limited in pursuit of the limitless is fatal; and to presume that one really knows is fatal indeed!

In doing good, avoid fame. In doing bad, avoid disgrace. Pursue a middle course as your principle. Thus you will guard your body from harm, preserve your life, fulfil your duties by your parents, and live your allotted span of life.

Prince Huei's cook was cutting up a bullock. Every blow of his hand, every heave of his shoulders, every tread of his foot, every thrust of his knee, every *whshh* of rent flesh, every *chhk* of the chopper, was in perfect rhythm,—like the dance of the *Mulberry Grove*, like the harmonious chords of *Ching Shou*.

"Well done!" cried the Prince. "Yours is skill indeed!"

"Sire," replied the cook laying down his chopper, "I have always devoted myself to Tao, which is higher than mere skill. When I first began to cut up bullocks, I saw before me whole bullocks. After three years' practice, I saw no more whole animals. And now I work with my mind and not with my eye. My mind works along without the control of the senses. Falling back upon eternal principles, I glide through such great joints or cavities as there may be, according to the natural constitution of the animal. I do not even touch the convolutions of muscle and tendon, still less attempt to cut through large bones.

<sup>18</sup> Personal name of Chuangtse. "tse" being the equivalent of "Master."

<sup>19</sup> An important idea that recurs frequently in Chuangtse, all things are in constant flux and change, but are different aspects of the One.

"A good cook changes his chopper once a year,—because he cuts. An ordinary cook, one a month,—because he hacks. But I have had this chopper nineteen years, and although I have cut up many thousand bullocks, its edge is as if fresh from the whetstone. For at the joints there are always interstices, and the edge of a chopper being without thickness, it remains only to insert that which is without thickness into such an interstice. Indeed there is plenty of room for the blade to move about. It is thus that I have kept my chopper for nineteen years as though fresh from the whetstone.

"Nevertheless, when I come upon a knotty part which is difficult to tackle, I am all caution. Fixing my eye on it, I stay my hand, and gently apply my blade, until with a *hwah* the part yields like earth crumbling to the ground. Then I take out my chopper and stand up, and look around, and pause with an air of triumph. Then wiping my chopper, I put it carefully away."

"Bravo!" cried the Prince. "From the words of this cook I have learnt how to take care of my life."

When Hsien, of the Kungwen family, beheld a certain official, he was horrified, and said, "Who is that man? How came he to lose a leg? Is this the work of God, or of man?"

"Why, of course, it is the work of God, and not of man," was the reply. "God made this man one-legged. The appearance of men is always balanced. From this it is clear that God and not man made him what he is."

A pheasant of the marshes may have to go ten steps to get a peck, a hundred to get a drink. Yet pheasants do not want to be fed in a cage. For although they might have less worries, they would not like it.

When Laotse died, Ch'in Yi went to the funeral. He uttered three yells and departed.

A disciple asked him saying, "Were you not our Master's friend?"

"I was," replied Ch'in Yi.

"And if so, do you consider that a sufficient expression of grief at his death?" added the disciple.

"I do," said Ch'in Yi. "I had thought he was a (mortal) man, but now I know that he was not. When I went in to mourn, I found old persons weeping as if for their children, young ones wailing as if for their mothers. When these people meet, they must have said words on the occasion and shed tears without any intention. (To cry thus at one's death) is to evade the natural principles (of life and death) and increase human attachments, forgetting the source from which we receive this life. The ancients called this 'evading the retribution of Heaven.' The

Master came, because it was his time to be born; he went, because it was his time to go away. Those who accept the natural course and sequence of things and live in obedience to it are beyond joy and sorrow. The ancients spoke of this as the emancipation from bondage. The fingers may not be able to supply all the fuel, but the fire is transmitted, and we know not when it will come to an end."

### THIS HUMAN WORLD

YEN HUEI<sup>20</sup> went to take leave of Confucius. "Whither are you bound?" asked the Master.

"I am going to the State of Wei," was the reply.

"And what do you propose to do there?" continued Confucius.

"I hear," answered Yen Hui, "that the Prince of Wei is of mature age, but of an unmanageable disposition. He behaves as if the people were of no account, and will not see his own faults. He disregards human lives and the people perish; and their corpses lie about like so much undergrowth in a marsh. The people do not know where to turn for help. And I have heard you say that if a state be well governed, it may be passed over; but that if it be badly governed, then we should visit it. At the door of physicians there are many sick people. I would test my knowledge in this sense, that perchance I may do some good at that state."

"Alas!" cried Confucius, "you will be only going to your doom. For Tao must not bustle about. If it does it will have divergent aims. From divergent aims come restlessness; from restlessness comes worry, and from worry one reaches the stage of being beyond hope. The Sages of old first strengthened their own character before they tried to strengthen that of others. Before you have strengthened your own character, what leisure have you to attend to the doings of wicked men? Besides, do you know into what virtue evaporates by motion and where knowledge ends? Virtue evaporates by motion into desire for fame and knowledge ends in contentions. In the struggle for fame men crush each other, while their wisdom but provokes rivalry. Both are instruments of evil, and are not proper principles of living.

"Besides, if before one's own solid character and integrity become an influence among men and before one's own disregard for fame reaches the hearts of men, one should go and force the preaching of charity and duty and the rules of conduct on wicked men, he would only make these men hate him for his very goodness. Such a person may be called

<sup>20</sup> Best disciple of Confucius.

a messenger of evil. A messenger of evil will be the victim of evil from others. That, alas! will be your end.

"On the other hand, if the Prince loves the good and hates evil, what object will you have in inviting him to change his ways? Before you have opened your mouth, the Prince himself will have seized the opportunity to wrest the victory from you. Your eyes will be dazzled, your expression fade, your words will hedge about, your face will show confusion, and your heart will yield within you. It will be as though you took fire to quell fire, water to quell water, which is known as aggravation. And if you begin with concessions, there will be no end to them. If you neglect this sound advice and talk too much, you will die at the hands of that violent man.

"Of old, Chieh murdered Kuanlung P'ang, and Chou slew Prince Pikan. Their victims were both men who cultivated themselves and cared for the good of the people, and thus offended their superiors. Therefore, their superiors got rid of them, because of their goodness. This was the result of their love for fame.

"Of old, Yao attacked the Ts'ung-chih and Hsü-ao countries, and Yü attacked the Yu-hus. The countries were laid waste, their inhabitants slaughtered, their rulers killed. Yet they fought without ceasing, and strove for material objects to the last. These are instances of striving for fame or for material objects. Have you not heard that even Sages cannot overcome this love of fame and this desire for material objects (in rulers)? Are you then likely to succeed? But of course you have a plan. Tell it to me."

"Gravity of demeanour and humility; persistence and singleness of purpose,—will this do?" replied Yen Huei.

"Alas, no," said Confucius, "how can it? The Prince is a haughty person, filled with pride, and his moods are fickle. No one opposes him, and so he has come to take actual pleasure in trampling upon the feelings of others. And if he has thus failed in the practice of routine virtues, do you expect that he will take readily to higher ones? He will persist in his ways, and though outwardly he may agree with you, inwardly he will not repent. How then will you make him mend his ways?"

"Why, then," (replied Yen Huei) "I can be inwardly straight, and outwardly yielding, and I shall substantiate what I say by appeals to antiquity. He who is inwardly straight is a servant of God. And he who is a servant of God knows that the Son of Heaven and himself are equally the children of God.<sup>21</sup> Shall then such a one trouble whether his words are approved or disapproved by man? Such a person is commonly

<sup>21</sup> Lit. "regarded as sons (i.e. fathered) by Heaven."

regarded as an (innocent) child. This is to be a servant of God. He who is outwardly yielding is a servant of man. He bows, he kneels, he folds his hands—such is the ceremonial of a minister. What all men do, shall I not do also? What all men do, none will blame me for doing. This is to be a servant of man. He who substantiates his words by appeals to antiquity is a servant of the Sages of old. Although I utter the words of warning and take him to task, it is the Sages of old who speak, and not I. Thus I shall not receive the blame for my uprightness. This is to be the servant of the Sages of old. Will this do?"

"No! How can it?" replied Confucius. "Your plans are too many. You are firm, but lacking in prudence. However, you are only narrow-minded, but you will not get into trouble; but that is all. You will still be far from influencing him because your own opinions are still too rigid."

"Then," said Yen Huei, "I can go no further. I venture to ask for a method."

Confucius said, "Keep fast, and I shall tell you. Will it be easy for you when you still have a narrow mind? He who treats things as easy will not be approved by the bright heaven."

"My family is poor," replied Yen Huei, "and for many months we have tasted neither wine nor flesh. Is that not fasting?"

"That is a fast according to the religious observances," answered Confucius, "but not the fasting of the heart."

"And may I ask," said Yen Huei, "in what consists the fasting of the heart?"

"Concentrate your will. Hear not with your ears, but with your mind; not with your mind, but with your spirit. Let your hearing stop with the ears, and let your mind stop with its images. Let your spirit, however, be like a blank, passively responsive to externals. In such open receptivity only can Tao abide. And that open receptivity is the fasting of the heart."

"Then," said Yen Huei, "the reason I could not use this method was because of consciousness of a self. If I could apply this method, the assumption of a self would have gone. Is this what you mean by the receptive state?"

"Exactly so," replied the Master. "Let me tell you. Enter this man's service, but without idea of working for fame. Talk when he is in a mood to listen, and stop when he is not. Do without any sort of labels or self-advertisements. Keep to the One and let things take their natural course. Then you may have some chance of success. It is easy to stop walking: the trouble is to walk without touching the ground. As an agent of man, it is easy to use artificial devices; but not as an agent of

God. You have heard of winged creatures flying. You have never heard of flying without wings. You have heard of men being wise with knowledge. You have never heard of men wise without knowledge.

"Look at that emptiness. There is brightness in an empty room. Good luck dwells in repose. If there is not (inner) repose, your mind will be galloping about though you are sitting still. Let your ears and eyes communicate within but shut out all knowledge from the mind. Then the spirits will come to dwell therein, not to mention man. This is the method for the transformation (influencing) of all Creation. It was the key to the influence of Yü and Shun, and the secret of the success of Fu Hsi and Chi Chü. How much more should the common man follow the same rule?"

*(Two sections are omitted here.—Ed.)*

A certain carpenter Shih was travelling to the Ch'i State. On reaching Shady Circle, he saw a sacred *li* tree in the temple to the God of Earth. It was so large that its shade could cover a herd of several thousand cattle. It was a hundred spans in girth, towering up eighty feet over the hilltop, before it branched out. A dozen boats could be cut out of it. Crowds stood gazing at it, but the carpenter took no notice, and went on his way without even casting a look behind. His apprentice however took a good look at it, and when he caught up with his master, said, "Ever since I have handled an adze in your service, I have never seen such a splendid piece of timber. How was it that you, Master, did not care to stop and look at it?"

"Forget about it. It's not worth talking about," replied his master. "It's good for nothing. Made into a boat, it would sink; into a coffin, it would rot; into furniture, it would break easily; into a door, it would sweat; into a pillar, it would be worm-eaten. It is wood of no quality, and of no use. That is why it has attained its present age."

When the carpenter reached home, he dreamt that the spirit of the tree appeared to him in his sleep and spoke to him as follows: "What is it you intend to compare me with? Is it with fine-grained wood? Look at the cherry-apple, the pear, the orange, the pumelo, and other fruit-bearers? As soon as their fruit ripens they are stripped and treated with indignity. The great boughs are snapped off, the small ones scattered abroad. Thus do these trees by their own value injure their own lives. They cannot fulfil their allotted span of years, but perish prematurely because they destroy themselves for the (admiration of) the world. Thus it is with all things. Moreover, I tried for a long period to be useless. Many times I was in danger of being cut down, but at length I have succeeded, and so have become exceedingly useful to myself. Had I indeed been of use, I should not be able to grow to this height. More-

over, you and I are both created things. Have done then with this criticism of each other. Is a good-for-nothing fellow in imminent danger of death a fit person to talk of a good-for-nothing tree?"

When the carpenter Shih awaked and told his dream, his apprentice said, "If the tree aimed at uselessness, how was it that it became a sacred tree?"

"Hush!" replied his master. "Keep quiet. It merely took refuge in the temple to escape from the abuse of those who do not appreciate it. Had it not become sacred, how many would have wanted to cut it down! Moreover, the means it adopts for safety is different from that of others, and to criticize it by ordinary standards would be far wide of the mark."

Tsech'i of Nan-po was travelling on the hill of Shang when he saw a large tree which astonished him very much. A thousand chariot teams of four horses could find shelter under its shade.

"What tree is this?" cried Tsech'i. "Surely it must be unusually fine timber." Then looking up, he saw that its branches were too crooked for rafters; and looking down he saw that the trunk's twisting loose grain made it valueless for coffins. He tasted a leaf, but it took the skin off his lips; and its odour was so strong that it would make a man intoxicated for three days together.

"Ah!" said Tsech'i, "this tree is really good for nothing, and that is how it has attained this size. A spiritual man might well follow its example of uselessness."

In the State of Sung there is a land belonging to the Chings, where thrive the catalpa, the cedar, and the mulberry. Such as are of one span or so in girth are cut down for monkey cages. Those of two or three spans are cut down for the beams of fine houses. Those of seven or eight spans are cut down for the solid (unjointed) sides of rich men's coffins. Thus they do not fulfil their allotted span of years, but perish young beneath the axe. Such is the misfortune which overtakes worth.

For the sacrifices to the River God, neither bulls with white foreheads, nor pigs with high snouts, nor men suffering from piles, can be used. This is known to all the soothsayers, for these are regarded as inauspicious. The wise, however, would regard them as extremely auspicious (to themselves).

There was a hunchback named Su. His jaws touched his navel. His shoulders were higher than his head. His neck bone stuck out toward the sky. His viscera were turned upside down. His buttocks were where his ribs should have been. By tailoring, or washing, he was easily able to earn his living. By sifting rice he could make enough to support a



family of ten. When orders came down for a conscription, the hunchback walked about unconcerned among the crowd. And similarly, in government conscription for public works, his deformity saved him from being called. On the other hand, when it came to government donations of grain for the disabled, the hunchback received as much as three *chung*, and of firewood, ten faggots. And if physical deformity was thus enough to preserve his body until the end of his days, how much more should moral and mental deformity avail!

When Confucius was in the Ch'u State, the eccentric Chieh Yü passed his door, saying, "O phoenix! O phoenix! How hast thy virtue fallen! Wait not for the coming years, nor hanker back to the past. When the right principles prevail on earth, prophets will fulfil their mission. When the right principles prevail not, they will but preserve themselves. At the present day, they are but trying to keep out of jail! The good fortunes of this world are light as feathers, yet none estimates them at their true value. The misfortunes of this life are weighty as the earth, yet none knows how to keep out of their reach. No more, no more, show off your virtue. Beware, beware, move cautiously on! O brambles, O brambles, wound not my steps! I pick my way about, hurt not my feet!"<sup>22</sup>

The mountain trees invite their own cutting down; lamp oil invites its own burning up. Cinnamon bark can be eaten; therefore the tree is cut down. Lacquer can be used, therefore the tree is scraped. All men know the utility of useful things; but they do not know the utility of futility.

## DEFORMITIES, OR EVIDENCES OF A FULL CHARACTER<sup>23</sup>

IN THE STATE OF LU there was a man, named Wang T'ai, who had had one of his legs cut off. His disciples were as numerous as those of Confucius.

Ch'ang Chi asked Confucius, saying, "This Wang T'ai has been mutilated, yet he has as many followers in the Lu State as you. He neither stands up to preach nor sits down to give discourse; yet those who go to him empty, depart full. Is he the kind of person who can teach without words and influence people's minds without material means? What manner of man is this?"

"He is a sage," replied Confucius, "I wanted to go to him, but am merely behind the others. Even I will go and make him my teacher,—

<sup>22</sup> The first part of this song is found in the *Analects*.

<sup>23</sup> This chapter deals entirely with deformities—a literary device for emphasizing the contrast of the inner and the outer man.

why not those who are lesser than I? And I will lead, not only the State of Lu, but the whole world to follow him."

"The man has been mutilated," said Ch'ang Chi, "and yet people call him 'Master.' He must be very different from the ordinary men. If so, how does he train his mind?"

"Life and Death are indeed changes of great moment," answered Confucius, "but they cannot affect his mind. Heaven and earth may collapse, but his mind will remain. Being indeed without flaw, it will not share the fate of all things. It can control the transformation of things, while preserving its source intact."

"How so?" asked Ch'ang Chi.

"From the point of view of differentiation of things," replied Confucius, "we distinguish between the liver and the gall, between the Ch'u State and the Yüeh State. From the point of view of their sameness, all things are One. He who regards things in this light does not even trouble about what reaches him through the senses of hearing and sight, but lets his mind wander in the moral harmony of things. He beholds the unity in things, and does not notice the loss of particular objects. And thus the loss of his leg is to him as would be the loss of so much dirt."

"But he cultivates only himself," said Ch'ang Chi. "He uses his knowledge to perfect his mind, and develops his mind into the Absolute Mind. But how is it that people flock around him?"

"A man," replied Confucius, "does not seek to see himself in running water, but in still water. For only what is itself still can instil stillness into others. The grace of earth has reached only the pines and cedars; winter and summer alike, they are green. The grace of God has reached to Yao and to Shun, who alone attained rectitude. Happily he was able to rectify himself and thus become the means through which all were rectified. For the possession of one's original (nature) is evidenced in true courage. A man will, single-handed, brave a whole army. And if such a result can be achieved by one in search of fame through self-control, how much greater courage can be shown by one who extends his sway over heaven and earth and gives shelter to all things, who, lodging temporarily within the confines of a body with contempt for the superficialities of sight and sound, brings his knowledge to level all knowledge and whose mind never dies! Besides, he (Wang T'ai) is only awaiting his appointed hour to go up to Heaven. Men indeed flock to him of their own accord. How can he take seriously the affairs of this world?"

Shent'u Chia had only one leg. He studied under Pohun Wujen ("Muddle-Head No-Such-Person") together with Tsech'an<sup>24</sup> of the

<sup>24</sup> A well-known historical person, a model minister referred to in the *Analects*.

Cheng State. The latter said to him, "When I leave first, do you remain behind. When you leave first, I will remain behind."

Next day, when they were again together sitting on the same mat in the lecture-room, Tsech'an said, "When I leave first, do you remain behind. Or if you leave first, I will remain behind. I am now about to go. Will you remain or not? I notice you show no respect to a high personage. Perhaps you think yourself my equal?"

"In the house of the Master," replied Shent'u Chia, "there is already a high personage (the Master). Perhaps you think that you are the high personage and therefore should take precedence over the rest. Now I have heard that if a mirror is perfectly bright, dust will not collect on it, and that if it does, the mirror is no longer bright. He who associates for long with the wise should be without fault. Now you have been seeking the greater things at the feet of our Master, yet you can utter words like these. Don't you think you are making a mistake?"

"You are already mutilated like this," retorted Tsech'an, "yet you are still seeking to compete in virtue with Yao. To look at you, I should say you had enough to do to reflect on your past misdeeds!"

"Those who cover up their sins," said Shent'u Chia, "so as not to lose their legs, are many in number. Those who forget to cover up their misdemeanours and so lose their legs (through punishment) are few. But only the virtuous man can recognize the inevitable and remain unmoved. People who walked in front of the bull's-eye when Hou Yi (the famous archer) was shooting, would be hit. Some who were not hit were just lucky. There are many people with sound legs who laugh at me for not having them. This used to make me angry. But since I came to study under our Master, I have stopped worrying about it. Perhaps our Master has so far succeeded in washing (purifying) me with his goodness. At any rate, I have been with him nineteen years without being aware of my deformity. Now you and I are roaming in the realm of the spiritual, and you are judging me in the realm of the physical.<sup>25</sup> Are you not committing a mistake?"

At this Tsech'an began to fidget and his countenance changed, and he bade Shent'u Chia to speak no more.

There was a man of the Lu State who had been mutilated, by the name of Shushan No-toes. He came walking on his heels to see Confucius; but Confucius said, "You were careless, and so brought this misfortune upon yourself. What is the use of coming to me now?" "It was because I was inexperienced and careless with my body that I hurt my feet," replied No-toes. "Now I have come with something more

<sup>25</sup> Lit. "The outside of frame and bones."

precious than feet, and it is that which I am seeking to preserve. There is no man, but Heaven shelters him; and there is no man, but the Earth supports him. I thought that you, Master, would be like Heaven and Earth. I little expected to hear these words from you."

"Pardon my stupidity," said Confucius. "Why not come in? I shall discuss with you what I have learned." But No-toes left.

When No-toes had left, Confucius said to his disciples, "Take a good lesson. No-toes is one-legged, yet he is seeking to learn in order to make atonement for his previous misdeeds. How much more should those who have no misdeeds for which to atone?"

No-toes went off to see Lao Tan (Laotse) and said, "Is Confucius a Perfect One or is he not quite? How is it that he is so anxious to learn from you? He is seeking to earn a reputation by his abstruse and strange learning, which is regarded by the Perfect One as mere fetters."

"Why do you not make him regard life and death, and possibility and impossibility as alternations of one and the same principle," answered Lao Tan, "and so release him from these fetters?"

"It is God who has thus punished him," replied No-toes. "How could he be released?"

Duke Ai of the Lu State said to Confucius, "In the Wei State there is an ugly person, named Ait'ai (Ugly) T'o. The men who have lived with him cannot stop thinking about him. Women who have seen him, would say to their parents, 'Rather than be another man's wife, I would be this man's concubine.' There are scores of such women. He never tries to lead others, but only follows them. He wields no power of a ruler by which he may protect men's lives. He has no hoarded wealth by which to gratify their bellies, and is besides frightfully loathsome. He follows but does not lead, and his name is not known outside his own State. Yet men and women alike all seek his company. So there must be something in him that is different from other people. I sent for him, and saw that he was indeed frightfully ugly. Yet we had not been many months together before I began to see there was something in this man. A year had not passed before I began to trust him. As my State wanted a Prime Minister, I offered him the post. He looked sullenly before he replied and appeared as if he would much rather have declined. Perhaps he did not think me good enough for him! At any rate, I gave the post to him; but in a very short time he left me and went away. I grieved for him as for a lost friend, as though there were none left with whom I could enjoy having my kingdom. What manner of man is this?"

"When I was on a mission to the Ch'u State," replied Confucius, "I saw a litter of young pigs sucking their dead mother. After a while they

looked at her, and then all left the body and went off. For their mother did not look at them any more, nor did she seem any more to have been of their kind. What they loved was their mother; not the body which contained her, but that which made the body what it was. When a man is killed in battle, his coffin is not covered with a square canopy. A man whose leg has been cut off does not value a present of shoes. In each case, the original purpose of such things is gone. The concubines of the Son of Heaven do not cut their nails or pierce their ears. Those (servants) who are married have to live outside (the palace) and cannot be employed again. Such is the importance attached to preserving the body whole. How much more valued is one who has preserved his virtue whole?

"Now Ugly T'o has said nothing and is already trusted. He has achieved nothing and is sought after, and is offered the government of a country with the only fear that he might decline. Indeed he must be the one whose talents are perfect and whose virtue is without outward form!"

"What do you mean by his talents being perfect?" asked the Duke.

"Life and Death," replied Confucius, "possession and loss, success and failure, poverty and wealth, virtue and vice, good and evil report, hunger and thirst, heat and cold—these are changes of things in the natural course of events. Day and night they follow upon one another, and no man can say where they spring from. Therefore they must not be allowed to disturb the natural harmony, nor enter into the soul's domain. One should live so that one is at ease and in harmony with the world, without loss of happiness, and by day and by night, share the (peace of) spring with the created things. Thus continuously one creates the seasons in one's own breast. Such a person may be said to have perfect talents."

"And what is virtue without outward form?"

"When standing still," said Confucius, "the water is in the most perfect state of repose. Let that be your model. It remains quietly within, and is not agitated without. It is from the cultivation of such harmony that virtue results. And if virtue takes no outward form, man will not be able to keep aloof from it."

Some days afterwards Duke Ai told Mintse saying, "When first I took over the reins of government, I thought that in guiding the people and caring for their lives, I had done all my duty as a ruler. But now that I have heard the words of a perfect man, I fear that I have not achieved it, but am foolishly squandering my bodily energy and bringing ruin to my country. Confucius and I are not prince and minister, but friends in spirit."

Hunchback-Deformed-No-Lips spoke with Duke Ling of Wei and the Duke took a fancy to him. As for the well-formed men, he thought their necks were too scraggy. Big-Jar-Goitre spoke with Duke Huan of Ch'i, and the Duke took a fancy to him. As for the well-formed men, he thought their necks were too scraggy.

Thus it is that when virtue excels, the outward form is forgotten. But mankind forgets not that which is to be forgotten, forgetting that which is not to be forgotten. This is forgetfulness indeed! And thus the Sage sets his spirit free, while knowledge is regarded as extraneous growths; agreements are for cementing relationships, goods are only for social dealings, and the handicrafts are only for serving commerce. For the Sage does not contrive, and therefore has no use for knowledge; he does not cut up the world, and therefore requires no cementing of relationships; he has no loss, and therefore has no need to acquire; he sells nothing, and therefore has no use for commerce. These four qualifications are bestowed upon him by God, that is to say, he is fed by God. And he who is thus fed by God has little need to be fed by man. He wears the human form without human passions. Because he wears the human form he associates with men. Because he has not human passions the questions of right and wrong do not touch him. Infinitesimal indeed is that which belongs to the human; infinitely great is that which is completed in God.

Hueitse said to Chuangtse, "Do men indeed originally have no passions?"

"Certainly," replied Chuangtse.

"But if a man has no passions," argued Hueitse, "what is it that makes him a man?"

"Tao," replied Chuangtse, "gives him his expressions, and God gives him his form. How should he not be a man?"

"If then he is a man," said Hueitse, "how can he be without passions?"

"Right and wrong (approval and disapproval)," answered Chuangtse, "are what I mean by passions. By a man without passions I mean one who does not permit likes and dislikes to disturb his internal economy, but rather falls in line with nature and does not try to improve upon (the materials of) living."

"But how is a man to live this bodily life," asked Hueitse, "if he does not try to improve upon (the materials of) his living?"

"Tao gives him his expression," said Chuangtse, "and God gives him his form. He should not permit likes and dislikes to disturb his internal economy. But now you are devoting your intelligence to externals, and wearing out your vital spirit. Lean against a tree and sing; or sit against

a table and sleep! God has made you a shapely sight, yet your only thought is the *hard and white*." <sup>26</sup>

### THE GREAT SUPREME

HE WHO KNOWS what is of God and who knows what is of Man has reached indeed the height (of wisdom). One who knows what is of God patterns his living after God. One who knows what is of Man may still use his knowledge of the known to develop his knowledge of the unknown, living till the end of his days and not perishing young. This is the fullness of knowledge.

Herein, however, there is a flaw. Correct knowledge is dependent on objects, but the objects of knowledge are relative and uncertain (changing). How can one know that the natural is not really of man, and what is of man is not really natural? We must, moreover, have true men before we can have true knowledge.

But what is a true man? The true men of old did not override the weak, did not attain their ends by brute strength, and did not gather around them counsellors. Thus, failing they had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for self-satisfaction. And thus they could scale heights without trembling, enter water without becoming wet, and go through fire without feeling hot. That is the kind of knowledge which reaches to the depths of Tao. The true men of old slept without dreams, and waked up without worries. They ate with indifference to flavour, and drew deep breaths. For true men draw breath from their heels; the vulgar only from their throats. Out of the crooked, words are retched up like vomit. When man's attachments are deep, their divine endowments are shallow.

The true men of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death. They did not rejoice in birth, nor strive to put off dissolution. Unconcerned they came and unconcerned they went. That was all. They did not forget whence it was they had sprung, neither did they seek to inquire their return thither. Cheerfully they accepted life, waiting patiently for their restoration (the end). This is what is called not to lead the heart astray from Tao, and not to supplement the natural by human means. Such a one may be called a true man.

Such men are free in mind and calm in demeanour, with high foreheads. Sometimes disconsolate like autumn, and sometimes warm like spring, their joys and sorrows are in direct touch with the four seasons, in harmony with all creation, and none know the limit thereof. And so

<sup>26</sup> Hucitse often discusses the nature of attributes, like the "hardness" and "whiteness" of objects.

it is that when the Sage wages war, he can destroy a kingdom and yet not lose the affection of the people; he spreads blessing upon all things, but it is not due to his (conscious) love of fellow men. Therefore he who delights in understanding the material world is not a Sage. He who has personal attachments is not humane. He who calculates the time of his actions is not wise. He who does not know the interaction of benefit and harm is not a superior man. He who pursues fame at the risk of losing his self is not a scholar. He who loses his life and is not true to himself can never be a master of man. Thus Hu Puhsieh, Wu Kuang Po Yi, Shu Ch'i, Chi Tse, Hsü Yü, Chi T'o, and Shent'u Ti, were the servants of rulers, and did the behests of others, not their own.<sup>27</sup>

The true men of old appeared of towering stature and yet could not topple down. They behaved as though wanting in themselves, but without looking up to others. Naturally independent of mind, they were not severe. Living in unconstrained freedom, yet they did not try to show off. They appeared to smile as if pleased, and to move only in natural response to surroundings. Their serenity flowed from the store of goodness within. In social relationships, they kept to their inner character. Broad-minded, they appeared great; towering, they seemed beyond control. Continuously abiding, they seemed like doors kept shut; absent-minded, they seemed to forget speech. They saw in penal laws an outward form; in social ceremonies, certain means; in knowledge, tools of expediency; in morality, a guide. It was for this reason that for them penal laws meant a merciful administration; social ceremonies, a means to get along with the world; knowledge a help for doing what they could not avoid; and morality, a guide that they might walk along with others to reach a hill.<sup>28</sup> And all men really thought that they were at pains to make their lives correct.

For what they cared for was ONE, and what they did not care for was ONE also. That which they regarded as ONE was ONE, and that which they did not regard as ONE was ONE likewise. In that which was ONE, they were of God; in that which was not ONE, they were of man. And so between the human and the divine no conflict ensued. This was to be a true man.

Life and Death are a part of Destiny. Their sequence, like day and night, is of God, beyond the interference of man. These all lie in the inevitable nature of things. He simply looks upon God as his father; if he loves him with what is born of the body, shall he not love him also with that which is greater than the body? A man looks upon a ruler of men

<sup>27</sup> All of these historical and semi-historical persons were good men who lost their lives, by drowning or starving themselves, or pretending insanity, in protest against a wicked world, or just to avoid being called into office.

<sup>28</sup> General attitude of fluidity towards life.



as one superior to himself; if he is willing to sacrifice his body (for his ruler), shall he not then offer his pure (spirit) also?

When the pond dries up and the fishes are left upon the dry ground, rather than leave them to moisten each other with their damp and spittle, it would be far better to let them forget themselves in their native rivers and lakes. And it would be better than praising Yao and blaming Chieh to forget both (the good and bad) and lose oneself in Tao.

The Great (universe) gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death. And surely that which is such a kind arbiter of my life is the best arbiter of my death.

A boat may be hidden in a creek, or concealed in a bog, which is generally considered safe. But at midnight a strong man may come and carry it away on his back. Those dull of understanding do not perceive that however you conceal small things in larger ones, there will always be a chance of losing them. But if you entrust that which belongs to the universe to the whole universe, from it there will be no escape. For this is the great law of things.

To have been cast in this human form is to us already a source of joy. How much greater joy beyond our conception to know that that which is now in human form may undergo countless transitions, with only the infinite to look forward to? Therefore it is that the Sage rejoices in that which can never be lost, but endures always. For if we emulate those who can accept graciously long age or short life and the vicissitudes of events, how much more that which informs all creation on which all changing phenomena depend?

For Tao has its inner reality and its evidences. It is devoid of action and of form. It may be transmitted, but cannot be received. It may be obtained, but cannot be seen. It is based in itself, rooted in itself. Before heaven and earth were, Tao existed by itself from all time. It gave the spirits and rulers their spiritual powers, and gave Heaven and Earth their birth. To Tao, the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point in time is long ago, nor by the lapse of ages has it grown old.

Hsi Wei obtained Tao, and so set the universe in order. Fu Hsi <sup>29</sup> obtained it, and was able to steal the secrets of eternal principles. The Great Bear obtained it, and has never erred from its course. The sun and moon obtained it, and have never ceased to revolve. K'an P'i <sup>30</sup> obtained it, and made his abode in the K'unlun mountains. P'ing I <sup>31</sup> obtained it, and rules over the streams. Chien Wu <sup>32</sup> obtained it, and dwells on

<sup>29</sup> Mythical emperor (2852 B.C.) said to have discovered the principles of mutations of *Yin* and *Yang*.

<sup>30</sup> With a man's head, but a beast's body.

<sup>31</sup> A river spirit.

<sup>32</sup> A mountain God.

Mount T'ai. The Yellow Emperor <sup>33</sup> obtained it, and soared upon the clouds to heaven. Chuan Hsü <sup>34</sup> obtained it, and dwells in the Dark Palace. Yü Ch'iang <sup>35</sup> obtained it, and established himself at the North Pole. The Western (Fairy) Queen Mother obtained it, and settled at Shao Kuang, since when and until when, no one knows. P'eng Tsu obtained it, and lived from the time of Shun until the time of the Five Princes. Fu Yüeh obtained it, and as the Minister of Wu Ting <sup>36</sup> extended his rule to the whole empire. And now, charioted upon the Tungwei (one constellation) and drawn by the Chiwei (another constellation), he has taken his station among the stars of heaven.

Nanpo Tsek'uei said to Nü Yü (or Female Yü), "You are of a high age, and yet you have a child's complexion. How is this?"

Nü Yü replied, "I have learnt Tao."

"Could I get Tao by studying it?" asked the other.

"No! How can you?" said Nü Yü. "You are not the type of person. There was Puliang I. He had all the mental talents of a sage, but not Tao of the sage. Now I had Tao, though not those talents. But do you think I was able to teach him to become indeed a sage? Had it been so, then to teach Tao to one who has a sage's talents would be an easy matter. It was not so, for I had to wait patiently to reveal it to him. In three days, he could transcend this mundane world. Again I waited for seven days more, then he could transcend all material existence. After he could transcend all material existence, I waited for another nine days, after which he could transcend all life. After he could transcend all life, then he had the clear vision of the morning, and after that, was able to see the Solitary (One). After seeing the Solitary, he could abolish the distinctions of past and present. After abolishing the past and present, he was able to enter there where life and death are no more, where killing does not take away life, nor does giving birth add to it. He was ever in accord with the exigencies of his environment, accepting all and welcoming all, regarding everything as destroyed, and everything as in completion. This is to be 'secure amidst confusion,' reaching security through chaos."

"Where did you learn this from?" asked Nanpo Tsek'uei.

"I learned it from the Son of Ink," replied Nü Yü, "and the Son of Ink learned it from the Grandson of Learning, the Grandson of Learning from Understanding, and Understanding from Insight, Insight learned it from Practice, Practice from Folk Song, and Folk Song from Silence,

<sup>33</sup> A semi-mythical ruler, who ruled in 2698-2597 B.C.

<sup>34</sup> A semi-mythical ruler, who ruled in 2514-2437 B.C., shortly before Emperor Yao.

<sup>35</sup> A water god with a human face and a bird's body.

<sup>36</sup> A monarch of the Shang Dynasty, 1324-1266 B.C.

Silence from the Void, and the Void learned it from the Seeming Beginning."

Four men: Tsesze, Tseyü, Tseli, and Tselai, were conversing together, saying, "Whoever can make Not-being the head, Life the backbone, and Death the tail, and whoever realizes that death and life and being and non-being are of one body, that man shall be admitted to friendship with us." The four looked at each other and smiled, and completely understanding one another, became friends accordingly.

By-and-by, Tseyü fell ill, and Tsesze went to see him. "Verily the Creator is great!" said the sick man. "See how He has doubled me up." His back was so hunched that his viscera were at the top of his body. His cheeks were level with his navel, and his shoulders were higher than his neck. His neck bone pointed up towards the sky. The whole economy of his organism was deranged, but his mind was calm as ever. He dragged himself to a well, and said, "Alas, that God should have doubled me up like this!"

"Do you dislike it?" asked Tsesze.

"No, why should I?" replied Tseyü. "If my left arm should become a cock, I should be able to herald the dawn with it. If my right arm should become a sling, I should be able to shoot down a bird to broil with it. If my buttocks should become wheels, and my spirit become a horse, I should be able to ride in it—what need would I have of a chariot? I obtained life because it was my time, and I am now parting with it in accordance with Tao. Content with the coming of things in their time and living in accord with Tao, joy and sorrow touch me not. This is, according to the ancients, to be freed from bondage. Those who cannot be freed from bondage are so because they are bound by the trammels of material existence. But man has ever given way before God; why, then, should I dislike it?"

By-and-by, Tselai fell ill, and lay gasping for breath, while his family stood weeping around. Tseli went to see him, and cried to the wife and children: "Go away! You are impeding his dissolution." Then, leaning against the door, he said, "Verily, God is great! I wonder what He will make of you now, and whither He will send you. Do you think he will make you into a rat's liver or into an insect leg?"

"A son," answered Tselai, "must go whithersoever his parents bid him, East, West, North, or South. *Yin* and *Yang* are no other than a man's parents. If *Yin* and *Yang* bid me die quickly, and I demur, then the fault is mine, not theirs. The Great (universe) gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death. Surely that which is such a kind arbiter of my life is the best arbiter of my death.

"Suppose that the boiling metal in a smelting-pot were to bubble up and say, 'Make of me a Moyeh!' <sup>37</sup> I think the master caster would reject that metal as uncanny. And if simply because I am cast into a human form, I were to say, 'Only a man! only a man!' I think the Creator too would reject me as uncanny. If I regard the universe as the smelting pot, and the Creator as the Master Caster, how should I worry wherever I am sent?" Then he sunk into a peaceful sleep and waked up very much alive.

Tsesang Hu, Mengtse Fan, and Tsech'in Chang, were conversing together, saying, "Who can live together as if they did not live together? Who can help each other as if they did not help each other? Who can mount to heaven, and roaming through the clouds, leap about to the Ultimate Infinite, oblivious of existence, for ever and ever without end?" The three looked at each other and smiled with a perfect understanding and became friends accordingly.

Shortly afterwards, Tsesang Hu died, whereupon Confucius sent Tsekung to attend the mourning. But Tsekung found that one of his friends was arranging the cocoon sheets and the other was playing string instruments and (both were) singing together as follows:

"Oh! come back to us, Sang Hu,  
Oh! come back to us, Sang Hu,  
Thou hast already returned to thy true state,  
While we still remain here as men! Oh!"

Tsekung hurried in and said, "How can you sing in the presence of a corpse? Is this good manners?"

The two men looked at each other and laughed, saying, "What should this man know about the meaning of good manners indeed?" Tsekung went back and told Confucius, asking him, "What manner of men are these? Their object is to cultivate nothingness and that which lies beyond their corporeal frames. They can sit near a corpse and sing, unmoved. There is no name for such persons. What manner of men are they?"

"These men," replied Confucius, "play about beyond the material things; I play about within them. Consequently, our paths do not meet, and I was stupid to have sent you to mourn. They consider themselves as companions of the Creator, and play about within the One Spirit of the universe. They look upon life as a huge goitre or excrescence, and upon death as the breaking of a tumour. How could such people be concerned about the coming of life and death or their sequence? They

<sup>37</sup> A famous sword.

borrow their forms from the different elements, and take temporary abode in the common forms, unconscious of their internal organs and oblivious of their senses of hearing and vision. They go through life backwards and forwards as in a circle without beginning or end, strolling forgetfully beyond the dust and dirt of mortality, and playing about with the affairs of inaction. How should such men bustle about the conventionalities of this world, for the people to look at?"

"But if such is the case," said Tsekung, "which world (the corporeal or the spiritual) would you follow?"

"I am one condemned by God," replied Confucius. "Nevertheless, I will share with you (what I know)."

"May I ask what is your method?" asked Tsekung.

"Fishes live their full life in water. Men live their full life in Tao," replied Confucius. "Those that live their full life in water thrive in ponds. Those that live their full life in Tao achieve realization of their nature in inaction. Hence the saying 'Fish lose themselves (are happy) in water; man loses himself (is happy) in Tao.'"

"May I ask," said Tsekung, "about (those) strange people?"

"(Those) strange people," replied Confucius, "are strange in the eyes of man, but normal in the eyes of God. Hence the saying that the meanest thing in heaven would be the best on earth; and the best on earth, the meanest in heaven."

Yen Huei said to Chungni <sup>38</sup> (Confucius), "When Mengsun Ts'ai's mother died, he wept, but without snivelling; his heart was not grieved; he wore mourning but without sorrow. Yet although wanting in these three points, he is considered the best mourner in the State of Lu. Can there be really people with a hollow reputation? I am astonished."

"Mr. Mengsun," said Chungni, "has really mastered (the Tao). He has gone beyond the wise ones. There are still certain things he cannot quite give up, but he has already given up some things. Mr. Mengsun knows not whence we come in life nor whither we go in death. He knows not which to put first and which to put last. He is ready to be transformed into other things without caring into what he may be transformed—that is all. How could that which is changing say that it will not change, and how could that which regards itself as permanent realize that it is changing already? Even you and I are perhaps dreamers who have not yet awakened. Moreover, he knows his form is subject to change, but his mind remains the same. He believes not in real death, but regards it as moving into a new house. He weeps only when he sees others weep, as it comes to him naturally.

<sup>38</sup> Personal name of Confucius.

"Besides, we all talk of 'me.' How do you know what is this 'me' that we speak of? You dream you are a bird, and soar to heaven, or dream you are a fish, and dive into the ocean's depths. And you cannot tell whether the man now speaking is awake or in a dream.

"A man feels a pleasurable sensation before he smiles, and smiles before he thinks how he ought to smile. Resign yourself to the sequence of things, forgetting the changes of life, and you shall enter into the pure, the divine, the One."

Yi-erh-tse went to see Hsü Yu. The latter asked him, saying, "What have you learned from Yao?"

"He bade me," replied the former, "practice charity and do my duty, and distinguish clearly between right and wrong."

"Then what do you want here?" said Hsü Yu. "If Yao has already branded you with charity of heart and duty, and cut off your nose with right and wrong, what are you doing here in this free-and-easy, unfettered, take-what-comes neighbourhood?"

"Nevertheless," replied Yi-erh-tse. "I should like to loiter on its confines."

"If a man has lost his eyes," retorted Hsü Yu, "it is impossible for him to join in the appreciation of beauty of face and complexion or to tell a blue sacrificial robe from a yellow one."

"Wu Chuang's (No-Decorum's) disregard of her beauty," answered Yi-erh-tse, "Chü Liang's disregard of his strength, the Yellow Emperor's abandonment of his wisdom,—all these came from a process of purging and purification. And how do you know but that the Creator would rid me of my brandings, and give me a new nose, and make me fit to become a disciple of yourself?"

"Ah!" replied Hsü Yu, "that cannot be known. But I will give you an outline. Ah! my Master, my Master! He trims down all created things, and does not account it justice. He causes all created things to thrive and does not account it kindness. Dating back further than the remotest antiquity, He does not account himself old. Covering heaven, supporting earth, and fashioning the various forms of things, He does not account himself skilled. It is He whom you should seek."

Yen Huei spoke to Chungni (Confucius), "I am getting on."

"How so?" asked the latter.

"I have got rid of charity and duty," replied the former.

"Very good," replied Chungni, "but not quite perfect."

Another day, Yen Huei met Chungni and said, "I am getting on."

"How so?"

"I have got rid of ceremonies and music," answered Yen Hwei.

"Very good," said Chungni, "but not quite perfect."

Another day, Yen Hwei again met Chungni and said, "I am getting on."

"How so?"

"I can forget myself while sitting," replied Yen Hwei.

"What do you mean by that?" said Chungni, changing his countenance.

"I have freed myself from my body," answered Yen Hwei. "I have discarded my reasoning powers. And by thus getting rid of my body and mind, I have become One with the Infinite. This is what I mean by forgetting myself while sitting."

"If you have become One," said Chungni, "there can be no room for bias. If you have lost yourself, there can be no more hindrance. Perhaps you are really a wise one. I trust to be allowed to follow in your steps."

Tseyü and Tsesang were friends. Once when it had rained for ten days, Tseyü said, "Tsesang is probably ill." So he packed up some food and went to see him. Arriving at the door, he heard something between singing and weeping, accompanied with the sound of a string instrument, as follows: "O Father! O mother! Is this due to God? Is this due to man?" It was as if his voice was broken and his words faltered.

Whereupon Tseyü went in and asked, "Why are you singing in such manner?" "I was trying to think who could have brought me to this extreme," replied Tsesang, "but I could not guess it. My father and mother would hardly wish me to be poor. Heaven covers all equally. Earth supports all equally. How can they make me in particular so poor? I was seeking to find out who was responsible for this, but without success. Surely then I am brought to this extreme by *Destiny*."

## JOINED TOES

JOINED TOES AND EXTRA FINGERS seem to come from nature, yet, functionally speaking they are superfluous. Goitres and tumours seem to come from the body, yet in their nature, they are superfluous. And (similarly), to have many extraneous doctrines of charity and duty and regard them in practice as parts of a man's natural sentiments is not the true way of Tao. For just as joined toes are but useless lumps of flesh, and extra fingers but useless growths, so are the many artificial developments of the natural sentiments of men and the extravagances

of charitable and dutiful conduct but so many superfluous uses of intelligence.

People with superfluous keenness of vision put into confusion the five colours, lose themselves in the forms and designs, and in the distinctions of greens and yellows for sacrificial robes. Is this not so? Of such was Li Chu (the clear-sighted). People with superfluous keenness of hearing put into confusion the five notes, exaggerate the tonic differences of the six pitch-pipes, and the various *timbres* of metal, stone, silk, and bamboo of the *Huang-chung*, and the *Ta-lü*.<sup>39</sup> Is this not so? Of such was Shih K'uang (the music master). People who abnormally develop charity exalt virtue and suppress nature in order to gain a reputation, make the world noisy with their discussions and cause it to follow impractical doctrines. Is this not so? Of such were Tseng and Shih.<sup>40</sup> People who commit excess in arguments, like piling up bricks and making knots, analysing and inquiring into the distinctions of hard and white, identities and differences, wear themselves out over mere vain, useless terms. Is this not so? Of such were Yang and Mo.<sup>41</sup> All these are superfluous and devious growths of knowledge and are not the correct guide for the world.

He who would be the ultimate guide never loses sight of the inner nature of life. Therefore with him, the united is not like joined toes, the separated is not like extra fingers, what is long is not considered as excess, and what is short is not regarded as wanting. For duck's legs, though short, cannot be lengthened without dismay to the duck, and a crane's legs, though long, cannot be shortened without misery to the crane. That which is long in nature must not be cut off, and that which is short in nature must not be lengthened. Thus will all sorrow be avoided. I suppose charity and duty are surely not included in human nature. You see how many worries and dismays the charitable man has! Besides, divide your joined toes and you will howl: bite off your extra finger and you will scream. In the one case, there is too much, and in the other too little; but the worries and dismays are the same. Now the charitable men of the present age go about with a look of concern sorrowing over the ills of the age, while the non-charitable let loose the desire of their nature in their greed after position and wealth. Therefore I suppose charity and duty are not included in human nature. Yet from the time of the Three Dynasties downwards what a commotion has been raised about them!

Moreover, those who rely upon the arc, the line, compasses, and the

<sup>39</sup> *Huang-chung* and *ta-lü* were the standard pitch-pipes.

<sup>40</sup> Tseng Ts'an and Shih Yü, disciples of Confucius.

<sup>41</sup> Yang chu and Motse (Mo Ti).



square to make correct forms injure the natural constitution of things. Those who use cords to bind and glue to piece together interfere with the natural character of things. Those who seek to satisfy the mind of man by hampering it with ceremonies and music and affecting charity and devotion have lost their original nature. There is an original nature in things. Things in their original nature are curved without the help of arcs, straight without lines, round without compasses, and rectangular without squares; they are joined together without glue, and hold together without cords. In this manner all things live and grow from an inner urge and none can tell how they come to do so. They all have a place in the scheme of things and none can tell how they come to have their proper place. From time immemorial this has always been so, and it may not be tampered with. Why then should the doctrines of charity and duty continue to remain like so much glue or cords, in the domain of Tao and virtue, to give rise to confusion and doubt among mankind?

Now the lesser doubts change man's purpose, and the greater doubts change man's nature. How do we know this? Ever since the time when Shun made a bid for charity and duty and threw the world into confusion, men have run about and exhausted themselves in the pursuit thereof. Is it not then charity and duty which have changed the nature of man?

Therefore I have tried to show <sup>42</sup> that from the time of the Three Dynasties onwards, there is not one who has not changed his nature through certain external things. If a common man, he will die for gain. If a scholar, he will die for fame. If a ruler of a township, he will die for his ancestral honours. If a Sage, he will die for the world. The pursuits and ambitions of these men differ, but the injury to their nature resulting in the sacrifice of their lives is the same. Tsang and Ku were shepherds, and both lost their sheep. On inquiry it appeared that Tsang had been engaged in reading with a shepherd's stick under his arm, while Ku had gone to take part in some trials of strength. Their pursuits were different, but the result in each case was the loss of the sheep. Po Yi died for fame at the foot of Mount Shouyang.<sup>43</sup> Robber Cheh died for gain on the Mount Tungling. They died for different reasons, but the injury to their lives and nature was in each case the same. Why then must we applaud the former and blame the latter? All men die for something, and yet if a man dies for charity and duty, the world calls him a gentleman; but if he dies for gain, the world

<sup>42</sup> Beginning with this phrase, there is a marked change in style and vocabulary in this part of the chapter.

<sup>43</sup> Because he refused to serve a new dynasty.

calls him a low fellow. The dying being the same, one is nevertheless called a gentleman and the other called a low character. But in point of injury to their lives and nature, Robber Cheh was just another Po Yi. Of what use then is the distinction of 'gentleman' and 'low fellow' between them?

Besides, were a man to apply himself to charity and duty until he were the equal of Tseng or Shih, I would not call it good. Or to flavours, until he were the equal of Shu Erh (famous cook), I would not call it good. Or to sound, until he were the equal of Shih K'uang, I would not call it good. Or to colours, until he were the equal of Li Chu, I would not call it good. What I call good is not what is meant by charity and duty, but taking good care of virtue. And what I call good is not the so-called charity and duty, but following the nature of life. What I call good at hearing is not hearing others but hearing oneself. What I call good at vision is not seeing others but seeing oneself. For a man who sees not himself but others, or takes possession not of himself but of others, possessing only what others possess and possessing not his own self, does what pleases others instead of pleasing his own nature. Now one who pleases others, instead of pleasing one's own nature, whether he be Robber Cheh or Po Yi, is just another one gone astray.

Conscious of my own deficiencies in regard to Tao, I do not venture to practise the principles of charity and duty on the one hand, nor to lead the life of extravagance on the other.

### HORSES' HOOFS

HORSES HAVE HOOFS to carry them over frost and snow, and hair to protect them from wind and cold. They eat grass and drink water, and fling up their tails and gallop. Such is the real nature of horses. Ceremonial halls and big dwellings are of no use to them.

One day Polo (famous horse-trainer), <sup>44</sup> appeared, saying, "I am good at managing horses." So he burned their hair and clipped them, and pared their hoofs and branded them. He put halters around their necks and shackles around their legs and numbered them according to their stables. The result was that two or three in every ten died. Then he kept them hungry and thirsty, trotting them and galloping them, and taught them to run in formations, with the misery of the tasselled bridle in front and the fear of the knotted whip behind, until more than half of them died.

The potter says, "I am good at managing clay. If I want it round, I

<sup>44</sup> Sun Yang, 658-619 B.C.

use compasses; if rectangular, a square." The carpenter says, "I am good at managing wood. If I want it curved, I use an arc; if straight, a line." But on what grounds can we think that the nature of clay and wood desires this application of compasses and square, and arc and line? Nevertheless, every age extols Polo for his skill in training horses, and potters and carpenters for their skill with clay and wood. Those who manage (govern) the affairs of the empire make the same mistake.

I think one who knows how to govern the empire should not do so. For the people have certain natural instincts—to weave and clothe themselves, to till the fields and feed themselves. This is their common character, in which all share. Such instincts may be called "Heaven-born." So in the days of perfect nature, men were quiet in their movements and serene in their looks. At that time, there were no paths over mountains, no boats or bridges over waters. All things were produced, each in its natural district. Birds and beasts multiplied; trees and shrubs thrived. Thus it was that birds and beasts could be led by the hand, and one could climb up and peep into the magpie's nest. For in the days of perfect nature, man lived together with birds and beasts, and there was no distinction of their kind. Who could know of the distinctions between gentlemen and common people? Being all equally without knowledge, their virtue could not go astray. Being all equally without desires, they were in a state of natural integrity. In this state of natural integrity, the people did not lose their (original) nature.

And then when Sages appeared, crawling for charity and limping with duty, doubt and confusion entered men's minds. They said they must make merry by means of music and enforce distinctions by means of ceremony, and the empire became divided against itself. Were the uncarved wood not cut up, who could make sacrificial vessels? Were white jade left uncut, who could make the regalia of courts? Were Tao and virtue not destroyed, what use would there be for charity and duty? Were men's natural instincts not lost, what need would there be for music and ceremonies? Were the five colours not confused, who would need decorations? Were the five notes not confused, who would adopt the six pitch-pipes? Destruction of the natural integrity of things for the production of articles of various kinds—this is the fault of the artisan. Destruction of Tao and virtue in order to introduce charity and duty—this is the error of the Sages. Horses live on dry land, eat grass and drink water. When pleased, they rub their necks together. When angry, they turn round and kick up their heels at each other. Thus far only do their natural instincts carry them. But bridled and bitted, with a moon-shaped metal plate on their foreheads, they learn to cast vicious looks, to turn their heads to bite, to nudge at the yoke, to cheat the bit

out of their mouths or steal the bridle off their heads. Thus their minds and gestures become like those of thieves. This is the fault of Polo.

In the days of Ho Hsü,<sup>45</sup> the people did nothing in particular at their homes and went nowhere in particular in their walks. Having food, they rejoiced; tapping their bellies, they wandered about. Thus far the natural capacities of the people carried them. The Sages came then to make them bow and bend with ceremonies and music, in order to regulate the external forms of intercourse, and dangled charity and duty before them, in order to keep their minds in submission. Then the people began to labour and develop a taste for knowledge, and to struggle with one another in their desire for gain, to which there is no end. This is the error of the Sages.

### OPENING TRUNKS, OR A PROTEST AGAINST CIVILIZATION

THE PRECAUTIONS taken against thieves who open trunks, search bags, or ransack tills, consist in securing with cords and fastening with bolts and locks. This is what the world calls wit. But a strong thief comes and carries off the till on his shoulders, with box and bag, and runs away with them. His only fear is that the cords and locks should not be strong enough! Therefore, does not what the world used to call wit simply amount to saving up for the strong thief? And I venture to state that nothing of that which the world calls wit is otherwise than saving up for strong thieves; and nothing of that which the world calls sage wisdom is other than hoarding up for strong thieves.

How can this be shown? In the State of Ch'i, the neighbouring towns overlooked one another and one could hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks in the neighbouring town. Fishermen cast their nets and ploughmen ploughed the land in a territory of over two thousand *li*. Within its four boundaries, was there a temple or shrine dedicated, a god worshipped, or a hamlet, county or a district governed, but in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sages? Yet one morning <sup>46</sup> T'ien Ch'engtse slew the ruler of Ch'i, and stole his kingdom. And not his kingdom only, but the wisdom-tricks which he had got from the Sages as well; so that although T'ien Ch'engtse acquired the reputation of a thief, he lived as securely and comfortably as ever did either Yao or Shun. The small States did not venture to blame, nor the great States to punish him, and for twelve generations his descendants ruled over Ch'i.<sup>47</sup> Was

<sup>45</sup> A mythical ruler.

<sup>46</sup> 481 B.C.

<sup>47</sup> There is an anachronism here for Chuangtse lived to see only the ninth generation of T'iens. At least the number "twelve" must have been slipped in by a later scribe. This evidence is not sufficient to vitiate the whole chapter, as some "textual critics" claim.

this not a stealing the State of Ch'i and its wisdom-tricks of the Sages in order to preserve their thieves' lives? I venture to ask, was there ever anything of what the world esteems as great wit otherwise than saving up for strong thieves, and was there ever anything of what the world calls sage wisdom other than hoarding up for strong thieves?

How can this be shown? Of old, Lungfeng was beheaded, Pikan was disembowelled, Changhung was sliced to death, Tsehsü was thrown to the waves. All these four were learned ones, but they could not preserve themselves from death by punishment.

An apprentice to Robber Cheh asked him saying, "Is there then Tao (moral principles) among thieves?"

"Tell me if there is anything in which there is not Tao," Cheh replied. "There is the sage character of thieves by which booty is located, the courage to go in first, and the chivalry of coming out last. There is the wisdom of calculating success, and kindness in the equal division of the spoil. There has never yet been a great robber who was not possessed of these five qualities." It is seen therefore that without the teachings of the Sages, good men could not keep their position, and without the teachings of the Sages, Robber Cheh could not accomplish his ends. Since good men are scarce and bad men are the majority, the good the Sages do to the world is little and the evil great. Therefore it has been said, "If the lips are turned up, the teeth will be cold. It was the thinness of the wines of Lu which caused the siege of Hantan."<sup>48</sup>

When the Sages arose, gangsters appeared. Overthrow the Sages and set the gangsters free, and then will the empire be in order. When the stream ceases, the gully dries up, and when the hill is levelled the chasm is filled. When the Sages are dead, gangsters will not show up, but the empire will rest in peace. On the other hand, if the Sages do not pop off, neither will the gangsters drop off. Nor if you double the number of Sages wherewith to govern the empire will you do more than double the profits of Robber Cheh.

If pecks and bushels are used for measurement, the pecks and bushels themselves will also be stolen, along with the rice. If scales and steelyards are used for weighing, the scales and steelyards themselves will also be stolen along with the goods. If tallies and signets are used for good faith, the tallies and signets will also be stolen. If charity and duty are used for moral principles, charity and duty will also be stolen.

How is this so? Steal a hook and you hang as a crook; steal a kingdom

<sup>48</sup> Reference to a story. The states, Lu and Chao, both presented wine to the King of Ch'u. By the trickery of a servant, the flasks were exchanged, and Chao was blamed for presenting bad wine, and its city Hantan was besieged.

and you are made a duke. (The teachings of) charity and duty remain in the duke's domain. Is it not true, then, that they are thieves of charity and duty and of the wisdom of the Sages?

So it is that those who follow the way of brigandage are promoted into princes and dukes. Those who are bent on stealing charity and duty together with the measures, scales, tallies, and signets can be dissuaded by no rewards of official regalia and uniform, nor deterred by fear of sharp instruments of punishment. This doubling the profits of robbers like Cheh, making it impossible to get rid of them, is the fault of the Sages.

Therefore it has been said, "Fishes must be left in the water; the sharp weapons of a state must be left where none can see them."<sup>49</sup> These Sages are the sharp weapons of the world; they must not be shown to the world.

Banish wisdom, discard knowledge,<sup>50</sup> and gangsters will stop! Fling away jade and destroy pearls, and petty thieves will cease. Burn tallies and break signets, and the people will revert to their uncouth integrity. Split measures and smash scales, and the people will not fight over quantities. Trample down all the institutions of Sages, and the people will begin to be fit for discussing (Tao). Confuse the six pitch-pipes, confine flutes and string instruments to the flames, stuff up the ears of Blind Shih K'uang, and each man will keep his own sense of hearing. Put an end to decorations, confuse the five colours, glue up the eyes of Li Chu, and each man will keep his own sense of sight. Destroy arcs and lines, fling away squares and compasses, snap off the fingers of Ch'ui the Artisan, and each man will use his own natural skill. Wherefore the saying, "Great skill appears like clumsiness."<sup>51</sup> Cut down the activities of Tseng and Shih,<sup>52</sup> pinch the mouths of Yang Chu and Motse, discard charity and duty, and the virtue of the people will arrive at Mystic Unity.<sup>53</sup>

If each man keeps his own sense of sight, the world will escape being burned up. If each man keeps his own sense of hearing, the world will escape entanglements. If each man keeps his intelligence, the world will escape confusion. If each man keeps his own virtue, the world will avoid deviation from the true path. Tseng, Shih, Yang, Mo, Shih K'uang, Ch'ui, and Li Chu were all persons who developed their external character and involved the world in the present confusion so that the laws and statutes are of no avail.

Have you never heard of the Age of Perfect Nature? In the days of

<sup>49</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 36.

<sup>50</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 19.

<sup>51</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 45.

<sup>52</sup> See Note 40.

<sup>53</sup> *Hsüan'ung*, see Laotse, Ch. 1.

Yungch'eng, Tat'ing, Pohuang, Chungyang, Lili, Lihsü, Hisenyüan, Hohsü, Tsunlu, Chuyung, Fuhsi, and Shennung,<sup>54</sup> the people tied knots for reckoning. They enjoyed their food, beautified their clothing, were satisfied with their homes, and delighted in their customs. Neighbouring settlements overlooked one another, so that they could hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks of their neighbours, and the people till the end of their days had never been outside their own country.<sup>55</sup> In those days there was indeed perfect peace.

But nowadays any one can make the people strain their necks and stand on tiptoes by saying, "In such and such a place there is a Sage." Immediately they put together a few provisions and hurry off, neglecting their parents at home and their masters' business abroad, going on foot through the territories of the Princes, and riding to hundreds of miles away. Such is the evil effect of the rulers' desire for knowledge. When the rulers desire knowledge and neglect Tao, the empire is overwhelmed in confusion.

How can this be shown? When the knowledge of bows and cross-bows and hand-nets and tailed arrows increases, then they carry confusion among the birds of the air. When the knowledge of hooks and bait and nets and traps increases, then they carry confusion among the fishes of the deep. When the knowledge of fences and nets and snares increases, then they carry confusion among the beasts of the field. When cunning and deceit and flippancy and the sophistries of the "hard" and "white" and identities and differences increase in number and variety, then they overwhelm the world with logic.

Therefore it is that there is often chaos in the world, and the love of knowledge is ever at the bottom of it. For all men strive to grasp what they do not know, while none strive to grasp what they already know; and all strive to discredit what they do not excel in, while none strive to discredit what they do excel in. That is why there is chaos. Thus, above, the splendour of the heavenly bodies is dimmed; below, the power of land and water is burned up, while in between the influence of the four seasons is upset. There is not one tiny worm that moves on earth or an insect that flies in the air but has lost its original nature. Such indeed is the world chaos caused by the desire for knowledge!

Ever since the time of the Three Dynasties downwards, it has been like this. The simple and the guileless have been set aside; the specious and the cunning have been exalted. Tranquil inaction has given place to love of disputation; and disputation alone is enough to bring chaos upon the world.

<sup>54</sup> All legendary ancient rulers.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Laotse, Ch. 80.

## ON TOLERANCE

THERE HAS BEEN such a thing as letting mankind alone and tolerance; there has never been such a thing as governing mankind. Letting alone springs from the fear lest men's natural dispositions be perverted and tolerance springs from the fear lest their character be corrupted. But if their natural dispositions be not perverted, nor their character corrupted, what need is there left for government?

Of old, when Yao governed the empire, he made the people live happily; consequently the people struggled to be happy and became restless. When Chieh governed the empire he made the people live miserably; consequently the people regarded life as a burden and were discontented. Restlessness and discontent are subversive of virtue; and without virtue there has never been such a thing as stability.

When man rejoices greatly, he gravitates towards *yang* (the positive pole). When he is in great anger, he gravitates towards *yin* (the negative pole). If the equilibrium of positive and negative is disturbed, the four seasons are upset, and the balance of heat and cold is destroyed, man himself suffers physically thereby. It causes men to rejoice and sorrow inordinately, to live disorderly lives, be vexed in their thoughts, and lose their balance and form of conduct. When that happens, then the whole world seethes with revolt and discontent, and we have such men as Robber Cheh, Tseng, and Shih. Offer the entire world as rewards for the good or threaten the wicked with the dire punishments of the entire world, and it is still insufficient (to reform them). Consequently, with the entire world, one cannot furnish sufficient inducements or deterrents to action. From the Three Dynasties downwards, the world has lived in a helter-skelter of promotions and punishments. What chance have the people left for living the even tenor of their lives?

Besides, love (over-refinement) of vision leads to debauchery in colour; love of hearing leads to debauchery in sound; love of charity leads to confusion in virtue; love of duty leads to perversion of principles; love of ceremonies (*li*) leads to a common fashion for technical skill; love of music leads to common lewdness of thought; love of wisdom leads to a fashion for the arts; and love of knowledge leads to a fashion for criticism. If the people are allowed to live out the even tenor of their lives, the above eight may or may not be; it matters not. But if the people are not allowed to live out the even tenor of their lives, then these eight cause discontent and contention and strife, and throw the world into chaos.

Yet the world worships and cherishes them. Indeed deep-seated is the mental chaos of the world. Is it merely a passing mistake that can be simply removed? Yet they observe fasts before their discussion, bend



down on their knees to practise them, and sing and beat the drum and dance to celebrate them. What can I do about it?

Therefore, when a gentleman is unavoidably compelled to take charge of the government of the empire, there is nothing better than inaction (letting alone). By means of inaction only can he allow the people to live out the even tenor of their lives. Therefore he who values the world as his own self may then be entrusted with the government of the world; and he who loves the world as his own self may then be entrusted with the care of the world.<sup>56</sup> Therefore if the gentleman can refrain from disturbing the internal economy of man, and from glorifying the powers of sight and hearing, he can sit still like a corpse or spring into action like a dragon, be silent as the deep or talk with the voice of thunder, the movements of his spirit calling forth the natural mechanism of Heaven. He can remain calm and leisurely doing nothing, while all things are brought to maturity and thrive. What need then would have I to set about governing the world?

Ts'ui Chü asked Lao Tan,<sup>57</sup> saying, "If the empire is not to be governed, how are men's hearts to be kept good?"

"Be careful," replied Lao Tan, "not to interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man. Man's heart may be forced down or stirred up. In each case the issue is fatal. By gentleness, the hardest heart may be softened. But try to cut and polish it, and it will glow like fire or freeze like ice. In the twinkling of an eye it will pass beyond the limits of the Four Seas. In repose, it is profoundly still; in motion, it flies up to the sky. Like an unruly horse, it cannot be held in check. Such is the human heart."

Of old, the Yellow Emperor first interfered with the natural goodness of the heart of man, by means of charity and duty. In consequence, Yao and Shun wore the hair off their legs and the flesh off their arms in endeavouring to feed their people's bodies. They tortured the people's internal economy in order to conform to charity and duty. They exhausted the people's energies to live in accordance with the laws and statutes. Even then they did not succeed. Thereupon, Yao (had to) confine Huantou on Mount Ts'ung, exile the chiefs of the Three Miao and their people into the Three Weis, and banish the Minister of Works to Yutu, which shows he had not succeeded. When it came to the times of the Three Kings,<sup>58</sup> the empire was in a state of foment. Among the bad men were Chieh and Cheh; among the good were Tseng and Shih.

<sup>56</sup> See Laotse, Ch. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Laotse, Tan being one of the known personal names of Laotse (Li Tan, or Li Erh). "Lao" means "old," while "Li" is the family name.

<sup>58</sup> The founders of the Three Dynasties, Hsai, Shang and Chou (2205-222 B.C.).

By and by, the Confucianists and the Motseanists arose; and then came confusion between joy and anger, fraud between the simple and the cunning, recrimination between the virtuous and the evil-minded, slander between the honest and the liars, and the world order collapsed.

When the great virtue lost its unity, men's lives were frustrated. When there was a general rush for knowledge, the people's desires ever went beyond their possessions. The next thing was then to invent axes and saws, to kill by laws and statutes, to disfigure by chisels and awls. The empire seethed with discontent, the blame for which rests upon those who would interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man.

In consequence, virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of great states sat trembling in their ancestral halls. Then, when dead men lay about pillowed on each other's corpses, when cangued prisoners jostled each other in crowds and condemned criminals were seen everywhere, then the Confucianists and the Motseanists bustled about and rolled up their sleeves in the midst of gyves and fetters! Alas, they know not shame, nor what it is to blush!

Until I can say that the wisdom of Sages is not a fastener of cangues, and that charity of heart and duty to one's neighbour are not bolts for gyves, how should I know that Tseng and Shih were not the singing arrows <sup>59</sup> (forerunners) of (the gangsters) Chieh and Cheh? Therefore it is said, "Abandon wisdom and discard knowledge, and the empire will be at peace."

The Yellow Emperor sat on the throne for nineteen years, and his laws obtained all over the empire. Hearing that Kuangch'engtse was living on Mount K'ung-t'ung, he went there to see him, and said, "I am told that you are in possession of perfect Tao. May I ask what is the essence of this perfect Tao? I desire to obtain the essence of the universe to secure good harvests and feed my people. I should like also to control the *yin* and *yang* principles to fulfil the life of all living things."

"What you are asking about," replied Kuangch'engtse, "is merely the dregs of things. What you wish to control are the disintegrated factors thereof. Ever since the empire was governed by you, the clouds have rained before thickening, the foliage of trees has fallen before turning yellow, and the brightness of the sun and moon has increasingly paled. You have the shallowness of mind of a glib talker. How then are you fit to speak of perfect Tao?"

The Yellow Emperor withdrew. He resigned the Throne. He built himself a solitary hut, and sat upon white straw. For three months he remained in seclusion, and then went again to see Kuangch'engtse.

<sup>59</sup> Signal for attack.

The latter was lying with his head towards the south. The Yellow Emperor approached from below upon his knees. Kowtowing twice upon the ground, he said, "I am told that you are in possession of perfect Tao. May I ask how to order one's life so that one may have long life?"

Kuangch'engtse jumped up with a start. "A good question indeed!" cried he. "Come, and I will speak to you of perfect Tao. The essence of perfect Tao is profoundly mysterious; its extent is lost in obscurity.

"See nothing; hear nothing; guard your spirit in quietude and your body will go right of its own accord.

"Be quiet, be pure; toil not your body, perturb not your vital essence, and you will live for ever.

"For if the eye sees nothing, and the ear hears nothing, and the mind thinks nothing, your spirit will stay in your body, and the body will thereby live for ever.

"Cherish that which is within you, and shut off that which is without for much knowledge is a curse.

"Then I will take you to that abode of Great Light to reach the Plateau of Absolute *Yang*. I will lead you through the Door of the Dark Unknown to the Plateau of the Absolute *Yin*.

"The Heaven and Earth have their separate functions. The *yin* and *yang* have their hidden root. Guard carefully your body, and material things will prosper by themselves.

"I guard the original One, and rest in harmony with externals. Therefore I have been able to live for twelve hundred years and my body has not grown old."

The Yellow Emperor kowtowed twice and said, "Kuangch'engtse is surely God . . ." <sup>60</sup>

"Come," said Kuangch'engtse, "I will tell you. That thing is eternal; yet all men think it mortal. That thing is infinite; yet all men think it finite. Those who possess my Tao are princes in this life and rulers in the hereafter. Those who do not possess my Tao behold the light of day in this life and become clods of earth in the hereafter.

"Nowadays, all living things spring from the dust and to the dust return. But I will lead you through the portals of Eternity to wander in the great wilds of Infinity. My light is the light of sun and moon. My life is the life of Heaven and Earth. Before me all is nebulous; behind me all is dark, unknown. Men may all die, but I endure for ever."

When General Clouds was going eastwards, he passed through the branches of Fuyao (a magic tree) and happened to meet Great Nebulous.

<sup>60</sup> Lit. "Heaven."

The latter was slapping his thighs and hopping about. When General Clouds saw him, he stopped like one lost and stood still, saying, "Who are you, old man, and what are you doing here?"

"Strolling!" replied Great Nebulous, still slapping his thighs and hopping about.

"I want to ask about something," said General Clouds.

"Ough!" uttered Great Nebulous.

"The spirits of Heaven are out of harmony," said General Clouds; "the spirits of the Earth are smothered; the six influences <sup>61</sup> of the weather do not work together, and the four seasons are no longer regular. I desire to blend the essence of the six influences and nourish all living beings. What am I to do?"

"I do not know! I do not know!" cried Great Nebulous, shaking his head, while still slapping his thighs and hopping about.

So General Clouds did not press his question. Three years later, when passing eastwards through the plains of the Sung, he again fell in with Great Nebulous. The former was overjoyed, and hurrying up, said, "Has your Holiness <sup>62</sup> forgotten me? Has your Holiness forgotten me?"

He then kowtowed twice and desired to be allowed to interrogate Great Nebulous; but the latter said, "I wander on without knowing what I want. I rush about without knowing whither I am going. I simply stroll about, watching unexpected events. What should I know?"

"I too regard myself as rushing about," answered General Clouds; "but the people follow my movements. I cannot escape the people and what I do they follow. I would gladly receive some advice."

"That the scheme of empire is in confusion," said Great Nebulous, "that the conditions of life are violated, that the will of the Dark Heaven is not accomplished, that the beasts of the field are scattered, that the birds of the air cry at night, that blight strikes the trees and herbs, that destruction spreads among the creeping things,—this, alas! is the fault of those who would rule others."

"True," replied General Clouds, "but what am I to do?"

"Ah!" cried Great Nebulous, "keep quiet and go home in peace!"

"It is not often," urged General Clouds, "that I meet with your Holiness. I would gladly receive some advice."

"Ah," said Great Nebulous, "nourish your heart. Rest in inaction, and the world will be reformed of itself. Forget your body and spit forth intelligence. Ignore all differences and become one with the Infinite. Release your mind, and free your spirit. Be vacuous, be devoid of soul. Thus will things grow and prosper and return to their Root. Returning

<sup>61</sup> Yin, yang, wind, rain, light and darkness.

<sup>62</sup> Great Nebulous is here addressed as "Heaven." See Note 60.

to their Root without their knowing it, the result will be a formless whole which will never be cut up. To know it is to cut it up. Ask not about its name, inquire not into its nature, and all things will flourish of themselves."

"Your Holiness," said General Clouds, "has informed me with power and taught me silence. What I had long sought, I have now found." Thereupon he kowtowed twice and took leave.

The people of this world all rejoice in others being like themselves, and object to others being different from themselves. Those who make friends with their likes and do not make friends with their unlikes, are influenced by a desire to be above the others. But how can those who desire to be above the others ever be above the others? Rather than base one's judgment on the opinions of the many, let each look after his own affairs. But those who desire to govern kingdoms clutch at the advantages of (the systems of) the Three Kings<sup>63</sup> without seeing the troubles involved. In fact, they are trusting the fortunes of a country to luck, but what country will be lucky enough to escape destruction? Their chances of preserving it do not amount to one in ten thousand, while their chances of destroying it are ten thousand to nothing and even more. Such, alas! is the ignorance of rulers.

For to have a territory is to have something great. He who has something great must not regard the material things as material things. Only by not regarding material things as material things can one be the lord of things. The principle of looking at material things as not real things is not confined to mere government of the empire. Such a one may wander at will between the six limits of space or travel over the Nine Continents, unhampered and free. This is to be the Unique One. The Unique One is the highest among men.

The doctrine of the great man is (fluid) as shadow to form, as echo to sound. Ask and it responds, fulfilling its abilities as the help-mate of humanity. Noiseless in repose, objectless in motion, he brings you out of the confusion of your coming and going to wander in the Infinite. Formless in his movements, he is eternal with the sun. In respect of his bodily existence, he conforms to the universal standards. Through conformance to the universal standards, he forgets his own individuality. But if he forgets his individuality, how can he regard his possessions as possessions? Those who see possessions in possessions were the wise men of old. Those who regard not possessions as possessions are the friends of Heaven and Earth.

That which is low, but must be let alone, is matter. That which is humble, but still must be followed, is the people. That which is always

<sup>63</sup> See Note 58.

there but still has to be attended to, is affairs. That which is inadequate, but still has to be set forth, is the law. That which is remote from Tao, but still claims our attention, is duty. That which is biased, but must be broadened, is charity. Trivial, but requiring to be strengthened from within, that is ceremony. Contained within, but requiring to be uplifted, that is virtue. One, but not to be without modification, that is Tao. Spiritual, yet not to be devoid of action, that is God.

Therefore the Sage looks up to God, but does not offer to aid. He perfects his virtue, but does not involve himself. He guides himself by Tao, but makes no plans. He identifies himself with charity, but does not rely on it. He performs his duties towards his neighbours, but does not set store by them. He responds to ceremony, without avoiding it. He undertakes affairs without declining them, and metes out law without confusion. He relies on the people and does not make light of them. He accommodates himself to matter and does not ignore it. Things are not worth attending to, yet they have to be attended to. He who does not understand God will not be pure in character. He who has not clear apprehension of Tao will not know where to begin. And he who is not enlightened by Tao,—alas indeed for him!

What then is Tao? There is the Tao of God, and there is the Tao of man. Honour through inaction comes from the Tao of God: entanglement through action comes from the Tao of man. The Tao of God is fundamental: the Tao of man is accidental. The distance which separates them is great. Let us all take heed thereto!

### AUTUMN FLOODS <sup>64</sup>

IN THE TIME OF AUTUMN FLOODS, a hundred streams poured into the river. It swelled in its turbid course, so that it was impossible to tell a cow from a horse on the opposite banks or on the islets.

Then the Spirit of the River laughed for joy that all the beauty of the earth was gathered to himself. Down the stream he journeyed east, until he reached the North Sea. There, looking eastwards and seeing no limit to its wide expanse, his countenance began to change. And as he gazed over the ocean, he sighed and said to North-Sea Jo, "A vulgar proverb says that he who has heard a great many truths thinks no one equal to himself. And such a one am I. Formerly when I heard people detracting from the learning of Confucius or underrating the heroism of Po Yi, I did not believe it. But now that I have looked upon your inexhaustibility

<sup>64</sup> This chapter further develops the ideas in Chapter "On Levelling All Things" and contains the important philosophical concept of relativity.

—alas for me! Had I not reached your abode, I should have been for ever a laughing stock to those of great enlightenment!"

To this North-Sea Jo (the Spirit of the Ocean) replied, "You cannot speak of ocean to a well-frog, which is limited by his abode. You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect, which is limited by his short life. You cannot speak of Tao to a pedagogue, who is limited in his knowledge. But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere and have seen the great ocean, you know your own insignificance, and I can speak to you of great principles.

"There is no body of water beneath the canopy of heaven which is greater than the ocean. All streams pour into it without cease, yet it does not overflow. It is being continually drained off at the Tail-Gate,<sup>65</sup> yet it is never empty. Spring and autumn bring no change; floods and droughts are equally unknown. And thus it is immeasurably superior to mere rivers and streams. Yet I have never ventured to boast on this account. For I count myself, among the things that take shape from the universe and receive life from the *yin* and *yang*, but as a pebble or a small tree on a vast mountain. Only too conscious of my own insignificance, how can I presume to boast of my greatness?

"Are not the Four Seas to the universe but like ant-holes in a marsh? Is not the Middle Kingdom to the surrounding ocean like a tare-seed in a granary? Of all the myriad created things, man is but one. And of all those who inhabit the Nine Continents, live on the fruit of the earth, and move about in cart and boat, an individual man is but one. Is not he, as compared with all creation, but as the tip of a hair upon a horse's body?

"The succession of the Five Rulers,<sup>66</sup> the contentions of the Three Kings, the concerns of the kind-hearted, the labours of the administrators, are but this and nothing more. Po Yi refused the throne for fame. Chungni (Confucius) discoursed to get a reputation for learning. This over-estimation of self on their part—was it not very much like your own previous self-estimation in reference to water?"

"Very well," replied the Spirit of the River, "am I then to regard the universe as great and the tip of a hair as small?"

"Not at all," said the Spirit of the Ocean. "Dimensions are limitless; time is endless. Conditions are not constant; terms are not final. Thus, the wise man looks into space, and does not regard the small as too little, nor the great as too much; for he knows that there is no limit to dimensions. He looks back into the past, and does not grieve over what is far off, nor rejoice over what is near; for he knows that time is without end. He investigates fullness and decay, and therefore does not rejoice if he

<sup>65</sup> *Wei-lü*, a mythical hole in the bottom or end of the ocean.

<sup>66</sup> Mythical rulers before the Three Kings.

succeeds, nor lament if he fails; for he knows that conditions are not constant. He who clearly apprehends the scheme of existence does not rejoice over life, nor repine at death; for he knows that terms are not final.

"What man knows is not to be compared with what he does not know. The span of his existence is not to be compared with the span of his non-existence. To strive to exhaust the infinite by means of the infinitesimal necessarily lands him in confusion and unhappiness. How then should one be able to say that the tip of a hair is the *ne plus ultra* of smallness, or that the universe is the *ne plus ultra* of greatness?"

"Dialecticians of the day," replied the Spirit of the River, "all say that the infinitesimal has no form, and that the infinite is beyond all measurement. Is that true?"

"If we look at the great from the standpoint of the small," said the Spirit of the Ocean, "we cannot reach its limit; and if we look at the small from the standpoint of the great, it eludes our sight. The infinitesimal is a subdivision of the small; the colossal is an extension of the great. In this sense the two fall into different categories. This lies in the nature of circumstances. Now smallness and greatness presuppose form. That which is without form cannot be divided by numbers, and that which is above measurement cannot be measured. The greatness of anything may be a topic of discussion, and the smallness of anything may be mentally imagined. But that which can be neither a topic of discussion nor imagined mentally cannot be said to have greatness or smallness.

"Therefore, the truly great man does not injure others and does not credit himself with charity and mercy. He seeks not gain, but does not despise the servants who do. He struggles not for wealth, but does not lay great value on his modesty. He asks for help from no man, but is not proud of his self-reliance, neither does he despise the greedy. He acts differently from the vulgar crowd, but does not place high value on being different or eccentric; nor because he acts with the majority does he despise those that flatter a few. The ranks and emoluments of the world are to him no cause for joy; its punishments and shame no cause for disgrace. He knows that right and wrong cannot be distinguished, that great and small cannot be defined.

"I have heard say, 'The man of Tao has no (concern) reputation; the truly virtuous has no (concern for) possessions; the truly great man ignores self.' This is the height of self-discipline."

"But how then," asked the Spirit of the River, "arise the distinctions of high and low, of great and small in the material and immaterial aspects of things?"

"From the point of view of Tao," replied the Spirit of the Ocean,



"there are no such distinctions of high and low. From the point of view of individuals, each holds himself high and holds others low. From the vulgar point of view, high and low (honours and dishonour) are something conferred by others.

"In regard to distinctions, if we say that a thing is great or small by its own standard of great or small, then there is nothing in all creation which is not great, nothing which is not small. To know that the universe is but as a tare-seed, and the tip of a hair is (as big as) a mountain,—this is the expression of relativity.<sup>67</sup>

"In regard to function, if we say that something exists or does not exist, by its own standard of existence or non-existence, then there is nothing which does not exist, nothing which does not perish from existence. If we know that east and west are convertible and yet necessary terms, in relation to each other, then such (relative) functions may be determined.

"In regard to man's desires or interests, if we say that anything is good or bad because it is either good or bad according to our individual (subjective) standards, then there is nothing which is not good, nothing which is not bad. If we know that Yao and Chieh each regarded himself as good and the other as bad, then the (direction of) their interests becomes apparent.

"Of old Yao and Shun abdicated (in favour of worthy successors) and the rule was maintained, while Kuei (Prince of Yen) abdicated (in favour of Tsechih) and the latter failed. T'ang and Wu got the empire by fighting, while by fighting, Po Kung lost it. From this it may be seen that the value of abdicating or fighting, of acting like Yao or like Chieh, varies according to time, and may not be regarded as a constant principle.

"A battering-ram can knock down a wall, but it cannot repair a breach. Different things are differently applied. Ch'ichi and Hualiu (famous horses) could travel 1,000 *li* in one day, but for catching rats they were not equal to a wild cat. Different animals possess different aptitudes. An owl can catch fleas at night, and see the tip of a hair, but if it comes out in the daytime it can open wide its eyes and yet fail to see a mountain. Different creatures are differently constituted.

"Thus, those who say that they would have right without its correlate, wrong; or good government without its correlate, misrule, do not apprehend the great principles of the universe, nor the nature of all creation. One might as well talk of the existence of Heaven without that of Earth, or of the negative principle without the positive, which is clearly impossible. Yet people keep on discussing it without stop; such people must be either fools or knaves.

<sup>67</sup> Lit. "levelling of ranks or distinctions."

"Rulers abdicated under different conditions, and the Three Dynasties succeeded each other under different conditions. Those who came at the wrong time and went against the tide are called usurpers. Those who came at the right time and fitted in with their age are called defenders of Right. Hold your peace, Uncle River. How can you know the distinctions of high and low and of the houses of the great and small?"

"In this case," replied the Spirit of the River, "what am I to do about declining and accepting, following and abandoning (courses of action)?"

"From the point of view of Tao," said the Spirit of the Ocean,<sup>68</sup> "how can we call this high and that low? For there is (the process of) reverse evolution (uniting opposites). To follow one absolute course would involve great departure from Tao. What is much? What is little? Be thankful for the gift. To follow a one-sided opinion is to diverge from Tao. Be exalted, as the ruler of a State whose administration is impartial. Be at ease, as the Deity of the Earth, whose dispensation is impartial. Be expansive, like the points of the compass, boundless without a limit. Embrace all creation, and none shall be more sheltered or helped than another. This is to be without bias. And all things being equal, how can one say which is long and which is short? Tao is without beginning, without end. The material things are born and die, and no credit is taken for their development. Emptiness and fullness alternate, and their relations are not fixed. Past years cannot be recalled; time cannot be arrested. The succession of growth and decay, of increase and diminution, goes in a cycle, each end becoming a new beginning. In this sense only may we discuss the ways of truth and the principles of the universe. The life of things passes by like a rushing, galloping horse, changing at every turn, at every hour. What should one do, or what should one not do? Let the (cycle of) changes go on by themselves!"

"If this is the case," said the Spirit of the River, "what is the value of Tao?"

"Those who understand Tao," answered the Spirit of the Ocean<sup>68</sup> "must necessarily apprehend the eternal principles and those who apprehend the eternal principles must understand their application. Those who understand their application do not suffer material things to injure them.

"The man of perfect virtue cannot be burnt by fire, nor drowned by water, nor hurt by the cold of winter or the heat of summer, nor torn by bird or beast. Not that he makes light of these; but that he discriminates between safety and danger, is happy under prosperous and

<sup>68</sup> From here on to the end of this paragraph, most of the passages are rhymed.

adverse circumstances alike, and cautious in his choice of action, so that none can harm him.

"Therefore it has been said that Heaven (the natural) abides within, man (the artificial) without. Virtue abides in the natural. Knowledge of the action of the natural and of the artificial has its basis in the natural, its destination in virtue. Thus, whether moving forward or backwards, whether yielding or asserting, there is always a reversion to the essential and to the ultimate."

"What do you mean," enquired the Spirit of the River, "by the natural and the artificial?"

"Horses and oxen," answered the Spirit of the Ocean, "have four feet. That is the natural. Put a halter on a horse's head, a string through a bullock's nose. That is the artificial."

"Therefore it has been said, do not let the artificial obliterate the natural; do not let will obliterate destiny; do not let virtue be sacrificed to fame. Diligently observe these precepts without fail, and thus you will revert to the True."

The walrus<sup>69</sup> envies the centipede; the centipede envies the snake; the snake envies the wind; the wind envies the eye; and the eye envies the mind. The walrus said to the centipede, "I hop about on one leg, but not very successfully. How do you manage all those legs you have?"

"I don't manage them," replied the centipede. "Have you never seen saliva? When it is ejected, the big drops are the size of pearls, the small ones like mist. At random they fall, in countless numbers. So, too, does my natural mechanism move, without my knowing how I do it."

The centipede said to the snake, "With all my legs I do not move as fast as you with none. How is that?"

"One's natural mechanism," replied the snake, "is not a thing to be changed. What need have I for legs?"

The snake said to the wind, "I wriggle about by moving my spine, as if I had legs. Now you seem to be without form, and yet you come blustering down from the North Sea to bluster away to the South Sea. How do you do it?"

"'Tis true," replied the wind, "that I bluster as you say. But anyone who sticks his finger or his foot into me, excels me. On the other hand, I can tear away huge trees and destroy large buildings. This power is given only to me. Out of many minor defeats I win the big victory.<sup>70</sup> And to win a big victory is given only to the Sages."

<sup>69</sup> *K'uei*, a mythical, one-legged animal.

<sup>70</sup> Now a slogan used in China in the war against Japan.

When Confucius visited K'uang, the men of Sung surrounded him by several cordons. Yet he went on singing to his guitar without stop.

"How is it, Master," enquired Tselu, "that you are so cheerful?"

"Come here," replied Confucius, "and I will tell you. For a long time I have not been willing to admit failure, but in vain. Fate is against me. For a long time I have been seeking success, but in vain. The hour has not come. In the days of Yao and Shun, no man throughout the empire was a failure, though this was not due to their cleverness. In the days of Chieh and Chou, no man throughout the empire was a success, though this was not due to their stupidity. The circumstances happened that way.

"To travel by water without fear of sea-serpents and dragons,—this is the courage of the fisherman. To travel by land without fear of the wild buffaloes and tigers,—this is the courage of hunters. When bright blades cross, to look on death as on life,—this is the courage of the warrior. To know that failure is fate and that success is opportunity, and to remain fearless in times of great danger,—this is the courage of the Sage. Stop bustling, Yu! My destiny is controlled (by someone)."

Shortly afterwards, the captain of the troops came in and apologized, saying, "We thought you were Yang Hu; that was why we surrounded you. We find we have made a mistake." Whereupon he apologized and retired.

Kungsun Lung <sup>71</sup> said to Mou of Wei, "When young I studied the teachings of the elders. When I grew up, I understood the morals of charity and duty. I learned to level together similarities and differences, to confound arguments on "hardness" and "whiteness", to affirm what others deny, and justify what others dispute. I vanquished the wisdom of all the philosophers, and overcame the arguments of all people. I thought that I had indeed understood everything. But now that I have heard Chuangtse, I am lost in astonishment. I know not whether it is in arguing or in knowledge that I am not equal to him. I can no longer open my mouth. May I ask you to impart to me the secret?"

Prince Mou leaned over the table and sighed. Then he looked up to heaven and laughed, saying, "Have you never heard of the frog in the shallow well? The frog said to the turtle of the Eastern Sea, 'what a great time I am having! I hop to the rail around the well, and retire to rest in the hollow of some broken bricks. Swimming, I float on my armpits, resting my jaws just above the water. Plunging into the mud,

<sup>71</sup> A Neo-Motseanist (of the Sophist school) who lived after Chuangtse. This section must have been added by the latter's disciples, as is easy to see from the three stories about Chuangtse which follow.

I bury my feet up to the foot-arch, and not one of the cockles, crabs or tadpoles I see around me are my match. Besides, to occupy such a pool all alone and possess a shallow well is to be as happy as anyone can be. Why do you not come and pay me a visit?"

"Now before the turtle of the Eastern Sea had got its left leg down, its right knee had already stuck fast, and it shrank back and begged to be excused. It then told the frog about the sea, saying, 'A thousand *li* would not measure its breadth, nor a thousand fathoms its depth. In the days of the Great Yü, there were nine years of flood out of ten; but this did not add to its bulk. In the days of T'ang, there were seven years of drought out of eight; but this did not make its shores recede. Not to be affected by the passing of time, and not to be affected by increase or decrease of water,—such is the great happiness of the Eastern Sea.' At this the frog of the shallow well was considerably astonished, and felt very small, like one lost.

"For one whose knowledge does not yet appreciate the niceties of true and false to attempt to understand Chuangtse, is like a mosquito trying to carry a mountain, or an insect trying to swim a river. Of course he will fail. Moreover, one whose knowledge does not reach to the subtlest teachings, yet is satisfied with temporary success,—is not he like the frog in the well?

"Chuangtse is now climbing up from the realms below to reach high heaven. For him no north or south; lightly the four points are gone, engulfed in the unfathomable. For him no east or west; starting from the Mystic Unknown, he returns to the Great Unity. And yet you think you are going to find his truth by dogged inquiries and arguments! This is like looking at the sky through a tube, or pointing at the earth with an awl. Is not this being petty?

"Have you never heard how a youth of Shouling went to study the walking gait at Hantan? <sup>72</sup> Before he could learn the Hantan gait, he had forgotten his own way of walking, and crawled back home on all fours. If you do not go away now, you will forget what you have and lose your own professional knowledge."

Kungsun Lung's jaw hung open, his tongue clave to his palate, and he slunk away.

Chuangtse was fishing on the P'u River when the Prince of Ch'u sent two high officials to see him and said, "Our Prince desires to burden you with the administration of the Ch'u State."

Chuangtse went on fishing without turning his head and said, "I have heard that in Ch'u there is a sacred tortoise which died when it

<sup>72</sup> Capital of Chao.

was three thousand (years) old. The prince keeps this tortoise carefully enclosed in a chest in his ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its remains venerated, or would it rather be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?"

"It would rather be alive," replied the two officials, "and wagging its tail in the mud."

"Begone!" cried Chuangtse. "I too will wag my tail in the mud."

Hueitse was Prime Minister in the Liang State, and Chuangtse was on his way to see him.

Someone remarked, "Chuangtse has come. He wants to be minister in your place."

Thereupon Hueitse was afraid, and searched all over the country for three days and three nights to find him.

Then Chuangtse went to see him, and said, "In the south there is a bird. It is a kind of phoenix. Do you know it? When it starts from the South Sea to fly to the North Sea, it would not alight except on the *wu-t'ung* tree. It eats nothing but the fruit of the bamboo, drinks nothing but the purest spring water. An owl which had got the rotten carcass of a rat, looked up as the phoenix flew by, and screeched. Are you not screeching at me over your kingdom of Liang?"

Chuangtse and Hueitse had strolled on to the bridge over the Hao, when the former observed, "See how the small fish are darting about! That is the happiness of the fish."

"You not being a fish yourself," said Hueitse, "how can you know the happiness of the fish?"

"And you not being I," retorted Chuangtse, "how can you know that I do not know?"

"If I, not being you, cannot know what you know," urged Hueitse, "it follows that you, not being a fish, cannot know the happiness of the fish."

"Let us go back to your original question," said Chuangtse. "You asked me how I knew the happiness of the fish. Your very question shows that you knew that I knew. I knew it (from my own feelings) on this bridge."



# CHINESE DEMOCRACY





# The Book of History

Documents of Chinese Democracy

(*Shu Ching*)

## INTRODUCTION

### I. DOCUMENTS OF CHINESE DEMOCRACY

MUCH NONSENSE has been said about Chinese democracy or lack of it. This usually refers to the democratic machinery of government functioning in a typical modern republic like the United States of America, or with it as the standard of judgment (with electioneering, suffrage, Congressional control of the President, etc.). It does not refer to a true rule of the *demos*. On the other hand, when we speak of democracy as a way of life and talk of the spirit of democracy, it is so easy to take refuge under general terms like "freedom" and "dignity of the individual," which are all relative things either in modern America or in ancient China.

I still think that Abraham Lincoln's definition is the best. Taking that as the standard, I am forced to the conclusion that in ancient China, we have developed very definitely the idea of government for the people and by consent of the people, but not government by the people and of the people. On the other hand, considering democracy as a broad human ideal and not as a form of political machinery, I find these strange characteristics: that the Chinese temper is the democratic temper; that in fact the keeping of peace and order in the country depends not upon the governments or the soldiers, but ninety per cent. upon the self-government of the people; that the ideal, since the disastrous experiment of totalitarianism of the First Emperor of Ch'in in the end of the third century B.C., has always been to let the people

alone; that *laissez faire* has been the key policy; that no other policy has been found to work; that the great Chinese empire was ruled without police always; that rule by force was long ago given up as impracticable and has not been attempted since the Ch'in Emperor's days; that the function of law has always been negative, and people regard it a shame to go to law courts; that there were no lawyers; that soldiers were despised, used by contending bandits struggling for the possession of the empire in times of chaos, but never relied upon in the normal running of government; that there was a sharp distinction between the "civil" (*wen*) and the "military" (*wu*), the former always taking precedence over the latter.

On the positive side, I find (1) since the Han Dynasty, the Chinese society has always been a truly classless society. The abolition of the feudal system of the Chou Dynasty and of the rights of primogeniture during the Han made the existence of aristocracy as a class impossible. (2) The selective service of the Imperial examinations in existence for about 1,500 years operated to form a constantly changing ruling class of scholars, insuring the rise of talent from the country. No one, not even the son of a beggar, was prevented from taking the examinations, if he had the talent, and no boy of talent, rich or poor, was ever overlooked by his village for training to rise to that ruling scholar class. Consequently, every one could become the Premier, or "There is no blood in premiers or generals," as the Chinese proverb says. (3) The theory of the right to revolt was perfected from the very earliest days, as will be seen from the following selections from the *Book of History* and *Mencius*. This is based on (4) the theory of the "mandate of Heaven," which is that the ruler ruled the people in trust from Heaven for the welfare of the people, and that when a ruler misruled, he automatically forfeited his right to rule. When Mencius was asked why, in contradiction to the theory of loyalty and obedience to the monarch, Emperor Wu rose in revolt against the tyrant Chou and overthrew the Shang Dynasty, his reply was that the King, by his misrule, was a common thief. In fact, the theory of the "mandate from Heaven" forms the outstanding feature of the entire *Book of History*. A corollary of that theory is that that mandate constantly changed, and that no king need think himself secure. "The favour of Heaven is not easily preserved; Heaven is difficult to depend on;" these statements abound in the *Book of History* and *Book of Poetry*. The threat of revolution was always there, and the word for "revolution" in Chinese (*kehming*) means "to change the mandate." Consequently the divine right of kings became a very insecure and undependable thing. (5) The monarch was absolute in theory only; the system of imperial censors, appointed

to censor, not the people, but the Emperor himself and the officials, was well defined and well developed. In the *History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (University of Chicago), I have pointed out the instances when an Emperor could not even take a pleasure trip to the south at will, and when another could not appoint the son of his favourite concubine the Crown Prince, and the fight between the monarch and the censors and scholars dragged out for sixteen years.<sup>1</sup>

(6) Connected with the censorship was the idea of the importance of public opinion. At the very dawn of Chinese civilization, in the reign of Shun (2255-2198 B.C.), his minister Kao-yao said, "Heaven hears and sees through (the ears and eyes of) our people. Heaven expresses its disapproval through the expressed disapproval of our people; such connection is there between the upper and lower (worlds)"—thus making the people's voice the voice of God. Also, in the Great Declaration (1122 B.C.), Emperor Wu declared to his hosts, "Heaven sees through the eyes of my people; Heaven hears through the ears of my people." These statements were later developed by Mencius, and became the philosophy of government of the court officials and historians, so that "to keep open the channels of speech" was always a cardinal tenet.

(7) Back of it all was the concept that the people and ruler were complements in the structure of the state, found in several places in the *Book of History*, and further developed by Mencius. Mencius said regarding the different elements of a state, "The people are the most important, the spirits of the state the second, and the ruler the least important of all." As the book *Mencius* was prescribed reading in every school, every schoolboy learned this dictum from his childhood and had to commit it to memory. (8) Mencius further developed the theory of equality of all men. "The Sages are of the same species as ourselves." "All men can be Yao and Shun (ideal Sage emperors)." How did the Chinese find all these out? By common sense.

The peculiar developments of Chinese democracy can be understood only when we go back to the earliest sources of Chinese ideas. Why the Chinese never developed the parliamentary form of government, the election of rulers and the civil rights, will be apparent from any thoughtful study of Confucianism. The characteristics of Confucianism in the merging of morals and politics ("benevolent government," etc.), the emphasis on moral harmony as basis of political harmony, the total absence of any idea of "struggle" between ruler and subject or in any sphere will become apparent. It must be remembered that the philosophical basis of parliamentary government is distrust of the ruler. On the whole, Confucianism implies a naïve trust in the rulers, almost as

<sup>1</sup> See *History of the Press*, etc., p. 65.

naïve as the idea that a true government by the *demos* has ever become a reality. In fact, I would characterize the Confucian political ideal as strictly anarchism, in which moral culture of the people making government unnecessary becomes the ideal. If it is asked why the people of Chinatown in New York never have any use for the police, the answer is Confucianism. There never were any police in China for four thousand years. The people have got to learn to regulate their lives socially, and not rely upon the law. The law should be the resort of the scoundrel.

## II. THE BOOK OF HISTORY

THE IMPORTANCE of the *Book of History* (*Shu King*) is basic. It is to Confucianism as the *Upanishads* are to Hinduism. Its basic importance comes not only from the fact that it contains the earliest historical documents and earliest Chinese writing, but also from the fact that it contains the deep moral wisdom which is the fountainhead of Confucian ideas. Confucius was strictly a historian, engaged in historical research, and spoke of himself as a transmitter rather than an innovator. He had a passion for history. After reading the *Book of History*, one can understand how Confucian ideas took their rise, including the Confucian gift for moralizing. An intensive study of Mencius will also show that he was extremely familiar with the *Book of History* and frequently quoted it to support his arguments. The whole idea of "benevolent government" (starting as a phrase with Mencius and not with Confucius) was developed from the *Book of History*. A casual reading of the Great Declaration will make this plain. Similarly, the ideas of "parental government," of the importance of moral example, of the "mandate of Heaven," and of the voice of the people as the voice of God, are all there.

The documents bearing most directly on democratic ideas and principles are: Common Possession of Pure Virtue, The Great Declaration, and Announcement of the Duke of Shao.

This work is a collection of important speeches and declarations given on historical or ceremonial occasions, like address to a host on the day of battle, or to a subjugated people after conquest, address to a people on the dedication of a new city, speech of a chief minister on his resignation from office, etc. In form it consists of "Declarations," "Announcements," "Counsels," "Charges" and recorded important conversations of wise rulers or counsellors of the state. These important speeches, like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, were preserved in writing from the earliest times. There is an obscure tradition that there were one hundred pieces. Anyway, like the collection of *Liki*, it went through the hands of Confucius as the *Book of Poetry* was edited by him, and became one of the Con-

fucian classics taught and studied by the Confucian scholars almost as their specialty. For it must be remembered that the Confucian School was principally an historical school, as distinguished from the others. How many such documents there were it is difficult to say, but it is certain that there were far more than the twenty-eight or twenty-nine pieces handed down in the Modern Script by Fu Sheng in the beginning of Han Dynasty. Quotations from it lay about in the works of the philosophers of the centuries after Confucius. The *Tsochiian* alone has sixty-eight quotations, of which only twenty-five are found in the Modern Script portion, the rest mostly in the Ancient Script portion.

As it now exists, in the standard text, there are fifty-eight pieces (counting the sub-divisions), of which thirty-four are common to both Scripts, while twenty-four are based on the Ancient Script alone. It is this division that has called forth a great controversy about the authenticity of the Ancient Script portion.

### III. ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE "ANCIENT SCRIPT"

THIS IS NOT THE PLACE to make a full and exhaustive discussion of the evidences for and against the Ancient Script of the *Book of History*. Inasmuch, however, as the present selection includes more documents of the Ancient Script than those common to the Modern Script and the Ancient Script, and inasmuch as some of the best passages occur in the Ancient Script portion, which is regarded by the majority of modern scholars as a forgery, a brief schematic outline of the reasons for including the Ancient Script portions must be given here for the lay reader.

A. *What are Ancient and Modern Scripts?*—When the first Ch'in Emperor burned the Confucian books in 213 B.C., most of them were destroyed. Four years later he died and his great empire began to crumble and in another three years, 206 B.C., it collapsed. There were many old scholars still living who had committed the texts to memory. A simplification of the Chinese script had taken place during the Ch'in reign by order of Li Sze, and the scholars began to write down what they remembered in the "Modern Script." Each particular version of the Confucian classics had a special tradition of interpretation which was handed down from teacher to student almost religiously. Then discoveries of ancient scripts kept coming to light. The most important one was the discovery of such texts in the walls of Confucius' house, evidently hidden there during the persecution, when Prince Kung of Lu began to tear it down to rebuild a better temple to Confucius. These were called the "Ancient Scripts." A separate tradition grew up, then, both with regard to text and interpretation. This division between the two traditions

touches not only the *Book of History*, but also all the other Confucian classics. It must be remembered also that Ancient Scripts which modern scholars are trying to discredit include such standard texts as the *Tsochüan* and Mao's *Book of Poetry*, which are still our generally accepted sacred texts.

The attack on the Ancient Script tradition began with that on the *Book of History*. The first formidable attack on its authenticity was launched by Yen Jochü in the seventeenth century, followed soon by Hui Tung. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a fashion grew up to attack the Ancient Script of the different classics one after another, partly in regard to text, more chiefly in regard to interpretation of ancient institutions. These scholars of the Modern Script school went on with the crusade and devoted themselves to the barren studies of "bleary-eyed" *Kungyang* and "deformed" *Kukiang* in preference to the rich masterpiece, *Tsochüan*, and of Ch'i, Han and Lu versions of the *Book of Poetry*, in preference to the Mao. *Chouli* was regarded as a forgery. The results were extremely meagre. The culprit of the forgery was usually traced to Wang Shu, or Lui Hsin. Finally, it culminated in the sweeping statement of K'ang Yuwei, the modern reformer associated with the reforms of 1898, who declared it was Confucius himself who forged all these books in order to lend an air of antiquity to his doctrines!

B. *Chronology of the Survival of the Book of History*.—The chronology of events concerning the survival of the two texts of the *Book of History* was as follows:

### *Third Century B.C.*

In the time of Confucius (sixth century B.C.), about 100 or less pieces were known to have existed, according to a comparatively late tradition. In 213 B.C., during the burning of Confucian books, most copies were destroyed, but many were hidden away. Between Confucius and the burning of books, many scholars gave quotations from the *Book of History*. Some pieces may have been lost before then (witness the confusion regarding *Liki*).

### *Second Century B.C.*

With the collapse of Ch'in and beginning of Han (206 B.C.), seven years after the burning, a scholar, Fu Sheng, who had hidden away his books in the wall, began to take them out, with many pieces missing, and to teach them to others. This was the *Modern Script*, of twenty-eight or twenty-nine pieces. During the reign of Han Wenti (179-157 B.C.), he was still living and over ninety years old. As he was too old to speak clearly, his daughter taught an official sent to his house by the Court. Owing to the difference in dialect, it was said, that the official missed twenty or thirty per cent. From

Han Wuti (140-87 B.C.), the preservation and teaching of this text were in the charge of a court official.

Between 140 and 128 B.C., Prince Kung of Lu tore down Confucius' house and discovered the Ancient Scripts of several classics. One of Confucius' descendants, K'ung Ankuo (who certainly lived between 156-74 B.C.) took three months to read them by comparing them with the Modern Script and presented them to the Court; owing to some meddlers, these were not officially accepted for preservation and study by the Court. This is the *Ancient Script*, consisting of fifty-eight pieces. It is stated, and disputed, that K'ung also wrote a commentary (the *K'ung commentary*) and edited a preface. Szema Ch'ien, the great historian and author of *Shiki* (145-before 86 B.C.) saw both K'ung himself and his texts, and quoted them.

### *First Century B.C.*

The titles and text of the Ancient Script were well known to various Han scholars. Liu Hsiang (79-6 B.C.) in his bibliographical work was able to give titles of the fifty-eight pieces and count over seven hundred variations.

### *First and Second Centuries A.D.*

Chia K'uei (A.D. 30-101), Ma Yung (A.D. 79-166) and Cheng K'ang-ch'eng (A.D. 127-200) wrote commentaries on the *Book of History*, but Ma Yung said there was "absolutely no teacher's tradition" in regard to the sixteen pieces (or twenty-four with sub-divisions) of the Ancient Script. Cheng, however, quoted K'ung's explanations and gave a full list of the fifty-eight pieces, differing in some pieces from the present text. Between A.D. 25-56, one piece (*Wu-ch'eng*) was lost. These scholars also made use of one "volume" of Ancient Script in lacquer writing, discovered by Tu Lin, who lived in the time of Kuangwuti (A.D. 25-57).

### *Third Century A.D.*

Wang Shu (A.D. 159-256), the "forger" and a contemporary of Cheng, wrote a commentary on the *Book of History*, differing from Cheng's and agreeing with K'ung's. Huangfu Mi (A.D. 215-282) and Ho Yen (died 249) also made use of the K'ung commentaries in their works.

### *Fourth Century A.D.*

In the reign of Yuanti (A.D. 317-322), Mei Tseh, a Recorder of the Interior, presented a copy of the K'ung text to the Emperor, which is our present official version, with fifty-eight pieces. Mei's tradition was traced back for five generations to Cheng Ch'ung in the time of Wang Shu. Mei was accused of forging the Ancient Script portion.



*Fifth Century A.D.*

Wang Shu's commentary and Cheng's commentary were accepted side by side, Wang's more in the south, Cheng's more in the north.

*Sixth Century A.D.*

In the T'ang Dynasty, K'ung Yingta (574-648) by imperial appointment wrote the commentary (*Chengyi*) on all fifty-eight pieces, incorporating the so-called K'ung commentaries. This became the standard text of the *Book of History* from then on to the present day.

C. *The Question of its Authenticity.*—1. Intimidated by the vast display of erudition by the scholar critics, the majority of the modern scholars have accepted the Ancient Script as a forgery, in the sense that the present Ancient Script is not the genuine text of K'ung Ankuo, that certain sub-divisions are unwarrantable, and that the so-called K'ung commentaries are not the genuine K'ung commentaries, though they believe generally in the Cheng commentaries. The last two points are less important than the first. Yen Jochü thought the Ancient Script had ceased to exist in Western Chin, and Mei Tseh was the forger, but Ting Yen thought it did exist in Western Chin and the forgery was by Wang Shu, and that because he was the grandfather-in-law of the first emperor of Western Chin, he was able to impose it on the scholars of the time. Ting Yen, however, concentrated on proving that the K'ung commentaries were not genuine, and that, furthermore K'ung never wrote commentaries at all. Wei Yüan went further still in 1855 and attacked the Cheng and Ma commentaries, and even asserted that K'ung himself was of the Modern Script tradition, that in fact there was no distinction between Ancient and Modern Script schools in the Western Han at all. Such contradictory theses show how flimsy was the evidence from which each deduced his own conclusions.

2. In spite of the lengthy scholarly work of these "textual critics," I consider their methods as unscientific by the standards of modern textual criticism. These critics (including Yao Tsi-heng) combined enormous scholarly industry and erudition with loose reasoning, although Hui Tung was otherwise an extremely exact and conscientious scholar, being one of the best in the Manchu Dynasty. It must also be remembered that great scholars of the time, Mao Ch'iling and Tuan Yüts'ai, did not accept the theory, and later Sun Hsingyen adopted a conciliatory attitude. The case must be reopened.

3. Both Hui and Yen argued in a circle. The principal fact is that hundreds of quotations from the *Book of History* exist in ancient texts (*Analects*, *Mencius*, *Tsochüan*, *Shiki*, *Liki*, *Motse*, *Hsiüntse*, etc.) which

cannot be found in the twenty-eight pieces (or thirty-four with subdivisions) of the Modern Script, but most of them can be found in the Ancient Script portion. The argument was that the "forger" collected these quotations and with the help of other ancient ideas and phrases wove them into a patchwork, which was presented as the lost documents of the *Book of History*. Hui Tung went to the length of tracing these ideas and phrases and actual quotations to their "sources." He said there "was nothing wrong with their ideas." Yen said there is "not one important saying (in the forged texts) which did not have an ancient source." Even the casual use of words was proved to have been in consonance with the ancient usage. What does that prove?

4. The type of argument is as follows. I have examined Hui Tung's fifteen points and found that none of them holds, although on each point he merely drew a cautious, sceptical conclusion. If Mencius gave a quotation from the *Book of History* and it is found in the Ancient Script, they say, "You see there is the source of the forgery." If the words of the quotation do not quite agree, the Ancient Script is accused of "corrupting" them. If Mencius quoted directly from famous pieces like the "Speech of T'ang" or the "Great Declaration," and the Modern Script pieces did not contain those quotations, they argue that of course the present Modern Script is not complete in these pieces, while they dismiss the evidence that the quotations do exist in the "Announcement of T'ang" and the Ancient Script version of the "Great Declaration," as of no importance. The tracing of certain words of general use is still worse: if *Tsochüan* used certain adjectives like "sincere" in connection with a certain person, that adjective may not be used of the same person by the Ancient Script without the charge of borrowing from *Tsochüan*. One of the chapters of *Liki* referred to the House of Yin as "Yi" in a certain sentence, and this Ancient Script has the same quotation; it is therefore argued that the Ancient Script should not have written it as Yi, whereas the right of the *Liki's* text itself to do so is never questioned. This is arguing in a circle. But the type of loose reasoning mostly used is purely subjective and unscientific. According to the Ancient Script, Emperor Yü went to suppress the aborigines (Miao) after Shun had driven them out, and the critics exclaimed: Shun had driven them out, why should his successor fight them again? Moreover, as an emperor he should have sent his general instead! They wish to forget that repeated revolts of "pacified" aborigines are not so rare in history. According to the Ancient Script, a speech before the army was given by Emperor Shun, but these critics say, according to the Modern Script, the earliest speech before an army on the day of the battle is known to have been made by his immediate successor, Emperor Yü, and therefore this custom should not have begun

with Shun, who was such a kind man. The assumption that the custom of addressing the hosts was suddenly invented by Yü is arbitrary and unwarranted. If in a Modern Script piece, Yao was described as offering the throne to Chi and Ch'i, then it was evidence of forgery for Yao to offer the same throne to Kao-yao also (in the Ancient Script piece). That is, Yao could have offered his throne to two persons successively, but not to three persons successively. As a matter of fact, Yao finally offered it to none of the three, but to Shun. If a certain piece of music (*Chiuko*), according to other ancient sources, is known only to have been played by Emperor Yü's son, then the mention of his father playing the same piece of music by the Ancient Script is adduced as evidence of contradiction to the ancient sources. There is no law forbidding a son from enjoying the same music as his father, and no evidence that that piece was composed by the son after the father died. In fact, many of the things mentioned by Mencius are just as "contradictory" to the tradition of the Modern Script, or just as much additions to the information in it, yet the authenticity of *Mencius* is not questioned. Such is the type of loose reasoning that leaves me unconvinced.

5. The only really "textual" criticism with regard to three words seems much better, but is connected with bad reasoning. The two words, *hsiang* for "premier" and *lun* for "discussion" are not known to have occurred in the Five Classics. They abound, however, in the *Analects*, *Mencius* and *Tsochüan*, and the argument is not conclusive. It is really straining the point, however, to say that the word *yieh* (originally a "saw," then "fear," then "profession," "accomplishment") may be used in the latter senses in *Liki*, handed down by Confucius, but may not be used in the same senses in the *Book of History*, also handed down by Confucius. At the very worst, no word was used which was not current at the time of Confucius and Mencius.

6. The "motive" for the crime is insufficiently established. It is said that Wang Shu forged it to support his interpretations against Cheng's. Actually, Wang's commentaries dealt almost entirely with the Modern Script portion. Wang could have forged the K'ung commentaries, and not the text itself. Moreover, the critics, by their labours, proved that there was a continuity of tradition in the preservation of the Ancient Script, and that there was hardly a period when the Ancient Script was unknown or had disappeared.

7. There is no question but that several texts of all the Confucian classics existed side by side (e.g., four versions of the *Book of Poetry*), that none of them can claim to be an exact, complete, unspoiled version, that when texts were copied from generation to generation, corruption was inevitable, that all our texts, including the *Analects*, contain interpola-

tions (usually at the end of chapters), and that the text of Mei Tseh is no exception. Mei was separated from the discovery of the Ancient Script in Confucius' walls by over four centuries. Even the assumption that there was only one correct, unspoiled, untouched text handed down by a kind of apostolic succession before the burning of books in 213 B.C. is incorrect. How did all the other books like *Motse*, *Mencius*, *Chuangtse*, *Ch'ü Yüan*, *Hsüntse*, *Kuoyü*, *Tsochüan* survive? Could even Confucius have the original text of the Canon of Yao 1,500 years old in his time? It is almost certain that variants were introduced, and that there were redivisions in at least two pieces. Redivisions and interpolations are part of the history of most ancient texts. But interpolations or redivisions are a different thing from forgery. It is also quite possible that the present K'ung commentaries may have been forged by Wang Shu, or someone else.

8. The fact remains that to cut out the Ancient Script portion from the *Book of History* would leave hundreds of quotations from it unaccounted for, especially when a quotation names the title of a particular piece, if we check it by the Modern Script. When Sun Hsingyen (A.D. 1753-1818) tried to do without the Ancient Script and restore the Great Declaration, the result was ridiculously meagre in content, with all the best quotations from this piece missing. The fact remains that the Ancient Script portion contains the richest parts of the work, and that irrespective of the argument whether our present copy is the original one found in Confucius' walls or any of the several found later, or just a later patchwork, most of its passages have, by the very labours of its critics, been proved to have existed as parts of the *Book of History* quoted in other works whose authenticity is not in question. Even as a patchwork of such quotations, it is an extremely useful piece of compilation. But more than that, the Ancient Script contains not only direct quotations, but also other material and ideas in the phraseology of the ancient times; the pieces have a good continuity and there are internal evidences of its authenticity; even the rhymes were ancient. It was such an able piece of work that it could deceive scholars for over 1,300 years, and it must have involved superhuman labours. I wish those critics would try such an undertaking of forgery themselves; even Confucius must shrink from the task. Finally, there is nothing regarding the condition of the text which we do not expect from one of that late date, and which we in fact find is true of both the *Analects* and the *Liki*.

9. The reader may therefore at least, pending the reopening of the case, regard those passages of the Ancient Script, which are supported by quotations found in other ancient sources like *Mencius*, as having certainly existed as parts of the *Book of History*, because *Mencius* said

so. In the annotations I have tried to point out the supporting sources only for what I regard as the more important passages. Through these notes, the reader may gain some idea of the nature of the arguments for and against the Ancient Script. Incidentally, if the reader wishes to gather the most important "democratic" statements of this work, he need only check them through the footnotes.

I have used James Legge's translation, whose somewhat pretentious and quaint diction seems to suit these ancient documents well. I have made changes only in the spelling of proper names to conform with the current Wade romanization. Legge would spell, for instance, the name of the Chou Dynasty as "Kâu." His curious spelling is due to the uniform spelling system of the Sacred Books of the East and to his Cantonese pronunciation.

# The Book of History

Documents of Chinese Democracy  
(*Shu Ching*)

*Translated by James Legge*

## THE CANON OF YAO<sup>1</sup> (*Being the Book of T'ang. Modern and Ancient Scripts*)<sup>2</sup>

1. Examining into antiquity,<sup>3</sup> (we find that) the Ti Yao was styled Fang-hsün. He was reverential, intelligent, accomplished, and thoughtful, —naturally and without effort. He was sincerely courteous, and capable of (all) complaisance. The bright (influence of these qualities) was felt through the four quarters (of the land), and reached to (heaven) above and (earth) beneath.

He made the able and virtuous distinguished, and thence proceeded to the love of (all in) the nine classes of his kindred, who (thus) became harmonious. He (also) regulated and polished the people (of his domain), who all became brightly intelligent. (Finally), he united and harmonized

<sup>1</sup> Although having little to do with democracy, this document is interesting in itself as the oldest known piece of writing in Chinese. Emperor Yao reigned in 2357–2256 B.C. The Canon itself was written down probably centuries later.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> This shows that the Canon of Yao was not written at the time of Yao, but much later, which may be anywhere in the second millennium B.C. Chinese writing was supposed to have been invented by Ts'ang Chi, a minister of the Yellow Emperor, which is a tradition of legendary character. Recently excavated oracle bone inscriptions, dating back to about 2090 B.C., show already advanced development.

the myriad states; and so the black-haired people were transformed. The result was (universal) concord.

2. He commanded the Hsis and Hos, in reverent accordance with (their observation of) the wide heavens, to calculate and delineate (the movements and appearances of) the sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiacal spaces, and so to deliver respectfully the seasons to be observed by the people.

He separately commanded the second brother Hsi to reside at Yü-i, in what was called the Bright Valley, and (there) respectfully to receive as a guest the rising sun, and to adjust and arrange the labours of the spring. 'The day,' (said he), 'is of the medium length, and the star is in Niao;—you may thus exactly determine mid-spring. The people are dispersed (in the fields), and birds and beasts breed and copulate.'

He further commanded the third brother Hsi to reside at Nan-chiao, (in what was called the Brilliant Capital), to adjust and arrange the transformations of the summer, and respectfully to observe the exact limit (of the shadow). 'The day' (said he), 'is at its longest, and the star is in Huo;—you may thus exactly determine mid-summer. The people are more dispersed; and birds and beasts have their feathers and hair thin, and change their coats.'

He separately commanded the second brother Ho to reside at the west, in what was called the Dark Valley, and (there) respectfully to convoy the setting sun, and to adjust and arrange the completing labours of the autumn. 'The night' (said he), 'is of the medium length, and the star is in Hsü;—you may thus exactly determine mid-autumn. The people feel at ease, and birds and beasts have their coats in good condition.'

He further commanded the third brother Ho to reside in the northern region in what was called the Sombre Capital, and (there) to adjust and examine the changes of the winter. 'The day' (said he), 'is at its shortest, and the star is in Mao;—you may thus exactly determine mid-winter. The people keep in their houses, and the coats of birds and beasts are downy and thick.'

The Ti<sup>4</sup> said, 'Ah! you, Hsis and Hos, a round year consists of three hundred and sixty-six days. Do you, by means of the intercalary month, fix the four seasons, and complete (the period of) the year. (Thereafter), the various officers being regulated in accordance with this, all the works (of the year) will be fully performed.'

3. The Ti said, 'Who will search out (for me) a man according to the times, whom I can raise and employ?' Fang-ch'i said, '(Your) heir-son Chu is highly intelligent.' The Ti said, 'Alas! he is insincere and quarrelsome:—can he do?'

<sup>4</sup> Ti means Emperor or Ruler

The Ti said, 'Who will search out (for me) a man equal to the exigency of my affairs?' Huan-tao said, 'Oh! the merits of the Minister of Works have just been displayed on a wide scale.' The Ti said, 'Alas! when all is quiet, he talks; but when employed, his actions turn out differently. He is respectful (only) in appearance. See! the floods assail the heavens!'

The Ti said, 'Ho! (President of) the Four Mountains, destructive in their overflow are the waters of the inundation. In their vast extent they embrace the hills and overtop the great heights, threatening the heavens with their floods, so that the lower people groan and murmur! Is there a capable man to whom I can assign the correction (of this calamity)?' All (in the court) said, 'Ah! is there not Kun?' The Ti said, 'Alas! how perverse he is! He is disobedient to orders, and tries to injure his peers.' (The President of) the Mountains said 'Well but—. Try if he can (accomplish the work).' (Kun) was employed accordingly. The Ti said (to him), 'Go; and be reverent!' For nine years he laboured, but the work was unaccomplished.

The Ti said, 'Ho! (President of) the Four Mountains, I have been on the throne seventy years. You can carry out my commands;—I will resign my place to you.' The Chief said, 'I have not the virtue;—I should disgrace your place.' (The Ti) said, 'Show me someone among the illustrious, or set forth one from among the poor and mean.' (All then) said to the Ti, 'There is an unmarried man among the lower people, called Shun of Yü.'<sup>5</sup> The Ti said, 'Yes, I have heard of him. What have you to say about him?' The Chief said, 'He is the son of a blind man. His father was obstinately unprincipled; his (step-) mother was insincere; his (half-) brother Hsiang was arrogant. He has been able, (however), by his filial piety to live in harmony with them, and to lead them gradually to self-government, so that they (no longer) proceed to great wickedness.' The Ti said, 'I will try him; I will wive him, and thereby see his behaviour with my two daughters.' (Accordingly) he arranged and sent down his two daughters to the north of the Kwei, to be wives in (the family of) Yü. The Ti said to them, 'Be reverent!'

[A division is made here in the Ancient Script, and what follows is given the name of the 'Canon of Shun,' while the Modern Script regards the whole as the Canon of Yao. A spurious paragraph of 28 words, added in A.D. 497, is omitted here.—Ed.]

4. (Shun) carefully set forth the beauty of the five cardinal duties, and they came to be (universally) observed. Being appointed to be General Regulator, the affairs of every (official) department were

<sup>5</sup> Emperor Shun who reigned in 2255-2206 B.C. as successor to Yao.



arranged in their proper seasons. (Being charged) to receive (the princes) from the four quarters of the land, they were all docilely submissive. Being sent to the great plains at the foot of the mountains, notwithstanding the tempests of wind, thunder, and rain, he did not go astray.

The Ti said, 'Come, you Shun. I have consulted you on (all) affairs, and examined your words, and found that they can be carried into practice;—(now) for three years. Do you ascend the seat of the Ti.' Shun wished to decline in favour of some one more virtuous, and not to consent to be (Yao's) successor. On the first day of the first month, (however), he received (Yao's) retirement (from his duties) in the temple of the Accomplished Ancestor.

5. He examined the pearl-adorned turning sphere, with its transverse tube of jade, and reduced to a harmonious system (the movements of) the Seven Directors.

Thereafter, he sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms, to God; sacrificed with reverent purity to the Six Honoured Ones; offered their appropriate sacrifices to the hills and rivers; and extended his worship to the host of spirits.

He called in (all) the five jaded-symbols of rank; and when the month was over, he gave daily audience to (the President of) the Four Mountains, and all the Pastors,<sup>6</sup> (finally) returning their symbols to the various princes.

In the second month of the year he made a tour of inspection eastwards, as far as Tai-chung, where he presented a burnt-offering to Heaven, and sacrificed in order to the hills and rivers. Thereafter he gave audience to the princes of the east. He set in accord their seasons and months, and regulated the days; he made uniform the standard-tubes, with the measures of length and of capacity, and the steel-yards; he regulated the five (classes of) ceremonies, with (the various) articles of introduction,—the five symbols of jade, the three kinds of silk, the two living (animals) and the one dead one. As to the five instruments of rank, when all was over, he returned them. In the fifth month he made a similar tour southwards, as far as the mountain of the south, where he observed the same ceremonies as at Tai. In the eighth month he made a tour westwards, as far as the mountain of the west, where he did as before. In the eleventh month he made a tour northwards, as far as the mountain of the north, where he observed the same ceremonies as in the west. He (then) returned (to the capital), went to (the temple of) the Cultivated Ancestor, and sacrificed a single bull.

In five years there was one tour of inspection, and there were four appearances of the princes at court. They gave a report (of their govern-

<sup>6</sup> *Mu*, literally "shepherds (of the people)."

ment) in words, which was clearly tested by their works. They received chariots and robes according to their merits.

He instituted the division (of the land) into twelve provinces, raising altars upon twelve hills in them. He (also) deepened the rivers.

He exhibited (to the people) the statutory punishments, enacting banishment as a mitigation of the five (great) inflictions; with the whip to be employed in the magistrates' courts, the stick to be employed in schools, and money to be received for redeemable offences. Inadvertent offences and those which could be ascribed to misfortune were to be pardoned, but those who transgressed presumptuously and repeatedly were to be punished with death. 'Let me be reverent! Let me be reverent!' (he said to himself.) 'Let compassion rule in punishment!'

He banished the Minister of Works to Yü island; confined Huan-tao on Mount Ch'ung; drove (the chief of) San miao (and his people) into San-wei and kept them there; and held Kun a prisoner till death on Mount Yü. These four criminals being thus dealt with, all under Heaven acknowledged the justice (of Shuh's administration).

6. After twenty-eight years the Ti deceased, when the people mourned for him as for a parent for three years. Within the four seas all the eight kinds of instruments of music were stopped and hushed. On the first day of the first month (of the) next year, Shun went to (the temple of) the Accomplished Ancestor.

7. He deliberated with (the President of) the Four Mountains how to throw open the doors (of communication between himself and the) four (quarters of the land), and how he could see with the eyes, and hear with the ears of all.

He consulted with the twelve Pastors, and said to them, 'The food!—it depends on observing the seasons. Be kind to the distant, and cultivate the ability of the near. Give honour to the virtuous, and your confidence to the good, while you discountenance the artful;—so shall the barbarous tribes lead on one another to make their submission.'

Shun said, 'Ho! (President of) the Four Mountains, is there anyone who can with vigorous service attend to all the affairs of the Ti, whom I may appoint to be General Regulator, to assist me in (all) affairs, managing each department according to its nature?' All (in the court) replied, 'There is Po-yü, the Minister of Works.' The Ti said, 'Yes. Ho! Yü, you have regulated the water and the land. In this (new office) exert yourself.' Yü did obeisance with his head to the ground, and wished to decline in favour of the Minister of Agriculture, or Hsieh, or Kao-yao. The Ti said, 'Yes, but do you go (and undertake the duties).'

The Ti said, 'Ch'i, the black-haired people are (still) suffering from

famine. Do you, O prince, as Minister of Agriculture, (continue to) sow (for them) the various kinds of grain.'

The Ti said, 'Hsieh, the people are (still) wanting in affection for one another, and do not docilely observe the five orders of relationship. It is yours, as the Minister of Instruction, reverently to set forth the lessons of duty belonging to those five orders. Do so with gentleness.'

The Ti said, 'Kao-yao, the barbarous tribes trouble our great land. There are (also) robbers, murderers, insurgents, and traitors. It is yours, as the Minister of Crime, to use the five punishments to deal with their offences. For the infliction of these there are the three appointed places. There are the five cases in which banishment in the appropriate places is to be resorted to, to which places, though five, three localities are assigned. Perform your duties with intelligence, and you will secure a sincere (submission).'

The Ti said, 'Who can superintend my works, as they severally require?' All (in the court) replied, 'Is there not Shui?' The Ti said, 'Yes. Ho! Shui, you must be Minister of Works.' Shui did obeisance with his head to the ground, and wished to decline in favour of Shu, Ch'iang, or Po-yü. The Ti said, 'Yes, but do you go (and undertake the duties). Effect a harmony (in all the departments).'

The Ti said, 'Who can superintend, as the nature of the charge requires, the grass and trees, with the birds and beasts on my hills and in my marshes?' All (in the court) replied, 'Is there not Yi?' The Ti said, 'Yes. Ho! Yi, do you be my Forester.' Yi did obeisance with his head to the ground, and wished to decline in favour of Chu, Hu, Hsiung, or Pi.<sup>7</sup> The Ti said, 'Yes but do you go (and undertake the duties). You must manage them harmoniously.'

The Ti said, 'Ho! (President of the) Four Mountains, is there any one able to direct my three (religious) ceremonies?' All (in the court) answered, 'Is there not Po-i?' The Ti said, 'Yes. Ho! Po, you must be the Arranger in the Ancestral Temple. Morning and night be reverent. Be upright, be pure.' Po did obeisance with his head to the ground, and wished to decline in favour of K'uei<sup>8</sup> or Lung.<sup>9</sup> The Ti said, 'Yes, but do you go (and undertake the duties). Be reverential!'

The Ti said, 'K'uei, I appoint you to be Director of Music and to teach our sons, so that the straightforward shall yet be mild; the gentle, dignified; the strong, not tyrannical; and the impetuous, not arrogant. Poetry is the expression of earnest thought; singing is the prolonged utterance of that expression; the notes accompany that utterance, and they are

<sup>7</sup> Four persons' names: Cedar (possibly Hog), Tiger, Bear and Grisly Bear.

<sup>8</sup> A horned animal.

<sup>9</sup> Dragon.

harmonized themselves by the standard-tubes. (In this way) the eight different kinds of musical instruments can be adjusted so that one shall not take from or interfere with the other; and spirits and men are brought into harmony.' K'uei said, 'I smite the (sounding-) stone, I gently strike it, and the various animals lead on one another to dance.'

The Ti said, 'Lung, I abominate slanderous speakers and destroyers of the (right) ways, who agitate and alarm my people. I appoint you to be the Minister of Communication.<sup>10</sup> Early and late give forth my orders and report to me, seeing that everything is true.'

The Ti said, 'Ho! you, twenty and two men, be reverent; so shall you be helpful to the business (entrusted to me by) Heaven.'

Every three years there was an examination of merits, and after three examinations the undeserving were degraded, and the deserving advanced. (By this arrangement) the duties of all the departments were fully discharged; the (people of) San-miao (also) were discriminated and separated.

8. In the thirtieth year of his age, Shun was called to employment. Thirty years he was on the throne (with Yao). Fifty years afterwards he went on high and died.

## THE COUNSELS OF THE GREAT YU

(*Book of Yü*,<sup>11</sup> II. *Ancient Script*)

1. Examining into antiquity, (we find that) the Great Yü<sup>12</sup> was styled Wen-ming. Having arranged and divided (the land), all to the four seas, in reverent response to the Ti, he said, 'If the sovereign can realize the difficulty of his sovereignty, and the minister the difficulty of his ministry, the government will be well ordered, and the black-haired people will sedulously seek to be virtuous.'

The Ti said, 'Yes; let this really be the case, and good words will nowhere lie hidden; no men of virtue and talents will be left neglected, away from court, and the myriad states will all enjoy repose. (But) to obtain the views of all; to give up one's opinion and follow that of others; to keep from oppressing the helpless, and not to neglect the straitened and poor;—it was only the (former) Ti who could attain to this.'

Yü said, 'Oh! your virtue, O Ti, is vast and incessant. It is sagely,

<sup>10</sup> *Na-yen*, strictly "to receive reports." The earliest reference to an office for communications between ruler and people that in later dynasties existed under various names.

<sup>11</sup> Name of the rule of Shun. In this "Book," the *Ti*, or Ruler, refers to Shun.

<sup>12</sup> This "Yü" (different from that in Note 11) is the great Emperor Yü, founder of Hsia Dynasty and successor to Shun.

spirit-like, awe-inspiring, and adorned with all accomplishments. Great Heaven regarded you with its favour, and bestowed on you its appointment. Suddenly you possessed all within the four seas, and became ruler of all under heaven.'

Yü said, 'Accordance with the right leads to good fortune; following what is opposed to it, to bad;—the shadow and the echo.' Yi said, 'Alas! be cautious! Admonish yourself to caution, where there seems to be no occasion for anxiety. Do not fail to observe the laws and ordinances. Do not find your enjoyment in idleness. Do not go to excess in pleasure. In your employment of men of worth, let none come between you and them. Put away evil without hesitation. Do not carry out plans, of (the wisdom of) which you have doubts. Study that all your purposes may be with the light of reason. Do not go against what is right, to get the praise of the people. Do not oppose the people's (wishes), to follow your own desires. (Attend to these things) without idleness or omission, and the barbarous tribes all around will come and acknowledge your sovereignty.'

Yü said, 'Oh! thing (of these things), O Ti. The virtue (of the ruler) is seen in (his) good government, and that government in the nourishing of the people.<sup>13</sup> There are water, fire, metal, wood, the earth, and grain,—these must be duly regulated; there are the rectification of (the people's) virtue, (the tools and other things) that supply the conveniences of life, and the securing abundant means of sustenance,—these must be harmoniously attended to. When the nine services (thus indicated) have been orderly accomplished, that accomplishment will be hailed by (the people's) songs. Caution them with gentle (words), correct them with the majesty (of law), stimulate them with the songs on those nine subjects,—in order that (your success) may not suffer diminution.' The Ti said, 'The earth has been reduced to order, and the (influences of) heaven produce their complete effect; those six magazines and three departments of (governmental) action are all truly regulated, and may be depended on for a myriad generations:—this is your merit.'

2. The Ti said, 'Come, you Yü. I have occupied my place for thirty and three years. I am between ninety and a hundred years old, and the laborious duties weary me. Do you, eschewing all indolence, take the leading of my people.'<sup>14</sup> Yü replied, 'My virtue is not equal (to the

<sup>13</sup> Yen Jo-chü who tried to prove that the whole Ancient Script was a forgery cites here a similar passage in *Tsochüan* to show the source of the forgery. The same evidence can be used to show that it was genuine, for *Tsochüan* expressly quotes from the *Book of History*. This is typical of Yen's method of reasoning and also of Hui Tung's. Almost all passages in this piece are traced to parallel passages in ancient texts (*Tsochüan*, *Book of Changes*, *Laotse*, *Motse*, *Hsüntse*, the *Analects*, etc.) most of which give them as quotations from the *Book of History*.

<sup>14</sup> Shun, like his predecessor Yao, did not give his throne to his son, but to the best man of proved ability in the kingdom. Hereditary succession began with Yü's son.

position), and the people will not repose in me. (But there is) Kao-yao with vigorous activity sowing abroad his virtue, which has descended on the black-haired people, till they cherish him in their hearts. O Ti, think of him! When I think of him, (my mind) rests on him (as the man fit for this place); when I would put him out of my thoughts, (my mind still) rests on him; when I name and speak of him, (my mind) rests on him (for this); the sincere outgoing of my thoughts about him is that he is the man. O Ti, think of his merits.'

The Ti said, 'Kao-yao, that of these ministers and all (my people) hardly one is found to offend against the regulations of the government is owing to your being Minister of Crime, and intelligent in the use of the five punishments, thereby assisting (the inculcation of) the five cardinal duties, with a view to the perfection of my government, and that through punishment there may come to be no punishments,<sup>15</sup> but the people accord with (the path of) the Mean. (Continue to) be strenuous.' Kao-yao replied, 'Your virtue, O Ti, is faultless. You condescend to your ministers with a kindly ease; you preside over the multitudes with a generous forbearance. Punishments do not extend to (the criminal's) heirs, while rewards reach to (succeeding) generations. You pardon inadvertent faults, however great, and punish proposed crimes, however small.<sup>16</sup> In cases of doubtful crimes, you deal with them lightly; in cases of doubtful merit, you prefer the high estimation. Rather than put an innocent person to death, you will run the risk of irregularity and error.<sup>17</sup> This life-loving virtue has penetrated the minds of the people, and this is why they do not render themselves liable to be punished by your officers.' The Ti said, 'That I am able to follow and obtain what I desire in my government, the people responding everywhere as if moved by the wind,—this is your excellence.'

The Ti said, 'Come, Yü. The inundating waters filled me with dread, when you accomplished truly (all that you had represented), and completed your service;—thus showing your superiority to other men. Full of toilsome earnestness in the service of the country, and sparing in your expenditure on your family, and this without being full of yourself and elated,—you (again) show your superiority to other men. You are without any prideful assumption, but no one under heaven can contest with you the palm of ability; you make no boasting, but no one under heaven can contest with you the palm of merit.<sup>18</sup> I see how great is your virtue,

<sup>15</sup> Parallel passage in a quotation from Shang Yang's book.

<sup>16</sup> Parallel passage in Wang Ch'ung.

<sup>17</sup> Exact words of a quotation from the *Book of History* (*Book of Hsia*) given in *Tsochüan*.

<sup>18</sup> See *Laotse*, Ch. 22, 24. The same idea is expressed in identical words in *Hsiüntse*, and generally in *Book of Changes*, *Tsochüan* and *Yi Choushu*, so that it is hardly possible to point even to *Laotse* as the ultimate source. *Laotse* himself quotes from ancient sayings.

how admirable your vast achievements. The determinate appointment of Heaven rests on your person; you must eventually ascend (the throne) of the great sovereign. The mind of man is restless, prone (to err); its affinity to what is right is small.<sup>19</sup> Be discriminating, be uniform (in the pursuit of what is right), that you may sincerely hold fast the Mean.<sup>20</sup> Do not listen to unsubstantiated words; do not follow plans about which you have not sought counsel. Of all who are to be loved, is not the ruler the chief? Of all who are to be feared, are not the people the chief? If the multitude were without their sovereign Head, whom should they sustain aloft? If the sovereign had not the multitude, there would be none to guard the country for him. Be reverential! Carefully maintain the throne which you are to occupy, cultivating (the virtues) that are to be desired in you. If within the four seas there be distress and poverty, your Heaven-conferred revenues will come to a perpetual end. It is the mouth which sends forth what is good, and raises up war. I will not alter my words.'

Yü said, 'Submit the meritorious ministers one by one to the trial of divination, and let the favouring indication be followed.' The Ti replied, '(According to the rules for) the regulation of divination, one should first make up his mind, and afterwards refer (his judgment) to the great tortoise-shell.<sup>21</sup> My mind (in this matter) was determined in the first place; I consulted and deliberated with all (my ministers and people), and they were of one accord with me. The spirits signified their assent, and the tortoise-shell and divining stalks concurred. Divination, when fortunate, should not be repeated.' Yü did obeisance with his head to the ground, and firmly declined (the place). The Ti said, 'You must not do so. It is you who can suitably (occupy my place).' On the first morning of the first month, (Yü) received the appointment in the temple (dedicated by Shun) to the spirits of his ancestors, and took the leading of all the officers, as had been done by the Ti at the commencement (of his government).

3. The Ti said, 'Alas! O Yü, there is only the lord of Miao who refuses obedience; do you go and correct him.' Yü on this assembled all the princes, and made a speech to the host, saying, 'Ye multitudes here arrayed, listen all of you to my orders. Stupid is this lord of Miao, ignorant, erring, and disrespectful. Despiteful and insolent to others, he thinks that all ability and virtue are with himself. A rebel to the right, he destroys (all the obligations of) virtue. Superior men are kept by him in obscurity, and mean men fill (all) the offices. The people reject him and will not protect him. Heaven is sending down calamities upon him.

<sup>19</sup> Parallel passage in Hsüntse.

<sup>20</sup> The *Analec*s gives this quotation as from the *Book of History*.

<sup>21</sup> This very interesting and sensible idea is found also in The Great Plan elsewhere in the *Book of History* of the Modern Script collection.

I therefore, along with you, my multitude of gallant men, bear the instructions (of the Ti) to punish his crimes. Do you proceed with united heart and strength, so shall our enterprise be crowned with success.'

At the end of three decades,<sup>22</sup> the people of Miao continued rebellious against the commands (issued to them), when Yi came to the help of Yü, saying, 'It is virtue that moves Heaven; there is no distance to which it does not reach. Pride brings loss, and humility receives increase;<sup>23</sup>—this is the way of Heaven. In the early time of the Ti, when he was living by Mount Li, he went into the fields, and daily cried with tears to compassionate Heaven, and to his parents, taking to himself all guilt, and charging himself with (their) wickedness. (At the same time) with respectful service he appeared before Ku-sau,<sup>24</sup> looking grave and awe-struck, till K'ü also became transformed by his example. Entire sincerity moves spiritual beings,—how much more will it move this lord of Miao!' Yü did homage to the excellent words, and said, 'Yes.' (Thereupon) he led back his army, having drawn off the troops. The Ti set about diffusing on a grand scale the virtuous influences of peace;—with shields and feathers they danced between the two staircases (in his courtyard). In seventy days, the lord of Miao came (and made his submission).<sup>25</sup>

## THE COUNSELS OF KAO-YAO

(*Book of Yü, III. Modern and Ancient Scripts*)

1. Examining into antiquity, (we find that) Kao-yao <sup>26</sup> said, 'If (the sovereign) sincerely pursues the course of his virtue, the counsels (offered to him) will be intelligent, and the aids (of admonition that he receives) will be harmonious.' Yü said, 'Yes, but explain yourself.' Kao-yao said, 'Oh! let him be careful about his personal cultivation, with thoughts that are far-reaching, and thus he will produce a generous kindness and nice observance of distinctions among the nine branches of his kindred. All the intelligent (also) will exert themselves in his service; and in this way from what is near he will reach to what is distant.' Yü did homage to the excellent words, and said, 'Yes.' Kao-yao continued, 'Oh! it lies in knowing men, and giving repose to the people.' Yü said, 'Alas! to attain

<sup>22</sup> Another interpretation is thirty days.

<sup>23</sup> Parallel passage in *Book of Changes*.

<sup>24</sup> Shun's own wicked father. Parallel story with further details in *Mencius*.

<sup>25</sup> As an example of the bad reasoning used to prove the forgery of the Ancient Script, I may cite the case here where both Hui and Yen impatiently ask if the Miaos were "pacified" why there was another expedition later. Common sense should see that periodic and repeated revolts of pacified aborigines are by no means uncommon. Arguments of this type prove nothing.

<sup>26</sup> Minister of Justice under Emperor Shun.



to both these things might well be a difficulty even to the Ti. When (the sovereign) knows men, he is wise, and can put every one into the office for which he is fit. When he gives repose to the people, his kindness is felt, and the black-haired race cherish him in their hearts.<sup>27</sup> When he can be (thus) wise and kind, what occasion will he have for anxiety about a Huan-tao? what to be removing a lord of Miao? what to fear any one of fair words, insinuating appearance, and great artfulness?

2. Kao-yao said, 'Oh! there are in all nine virtues to be discovered in conduct, and when we say that a man possesses (any) virtue, that is as much as to say he does such and such things.' Yü asked, 'What (are the nine virtues)?' Kao-yao replied, "Affability combined with dignity; mildness combined with firmness; bluntness combined with respectfulness; aptness for government combined with reverent caution; docility combined with boldness; straightforwardness combined with gentleness; an easy negligence combined with discrimination; boldness combined with sincerity; and valour combined with righteousness. (When these qualities are) displayed, and that continuously, have we not the good (officer)? When there is a daily display of three (of these) virtues, their possessor could early and late regulate and brighten the clan (of which he was made chief). When there is a daily severe and reverent cultivation of six of them, their possessor could brilliantly conduct the affairs of the state (with which he was invested). When (such men) are all received and advanced, the possessors of those nine virtues will be employed in (the public) service. The men of a thousand and men of a hundred will be in their offices; the various ministers will emulate one another; all the officers will accomplish their duties at the proper times, observant of the five seasons (as the several elements predominate in them),—and thus their various duties will be fully accomplished. Let not (the Son of Heaven) set to the holders of states the example of indolence or dissoluteness. Let him be wary and fearful, (remembering that) in one day or two days there may occur ten thousand springs of things. Let him not have his various officers cumberers of their places. The work is Heaven's; men must act for it!

3. 'From Heaven are the (social) relationships with their several duties; we are charged with (the enforcement of) those five duties;—and lo! we have the five courses of honourable conduct.<sup>28</sup> From Heaven are the (social) distinctions with their several ceremonies; from us come

<sup>27</sup> Ideas like this, common in the *Book of History*, inspired Mencius in his theory of "benevolent government." Mencius quoted the *Book of History* to the extent that we are justified in saying that the *Book of History* was the fountainhead of his democratic ideas. The passages he quoted are often missing in the Modern Script and found in the Ancient Script.

<sup>28</sup> Legge's translation follows, as usual, the T'ang and Sung commentators. This Confucianist interpretation is not warranted by such Han commentators as Cheng K'ang-ch'eng, and not by the text itself.

the observances of those five ceremonies;—and lo! they appear in regular practice. When (sovereign and ministers show) a common reverence and united respect for these, lo! the moral nature (of the people) is made harmonious. Heaven graciously distinguishes the virtues;—are there not the five habiliments, five decorations of them? Heaven punishes the guilty;—are there not the five punishments, to be severally used for that purpose? The business of government!—ought we not to be earnest in it? ought we not to be earnest in it?

'Heaven hears and sees as our people hear and see; Heaven brightly approves and displays its terrors as our people brightly approve and would awe; <sup>29</sup>—such connection is there between the upper and lower (worlds). How reverent ought the masters of territories to be!'

4. Kao-yao said, 'My words are in accordance with reason, and may be put in practice.' Yü said, 'Yes, your words may be put in practice, and crowned with success.' Kao-yao added, '(As to that) I do not know, but I wish daily to be helpful. May (the government) be perfected!' <sup>30</sup>

## THE SONGS OF THE FIVE SONS

(*Book of Hsia, III. Ancient Script.*)

1. T'ai-K'ang <sup>31</sup> occupied the throne like a personator of the dead. By idleness and dissipation he extinguished his virtue, till the black-haired people all wavered in their allegiance. He, however, pursued his pleasure and wanderings without any self-restraint. He went out to hunt beyond the Lo, and a hundred days elapsed without his returning. (On this) Yi, the prince of Ch'iung, taking advantage of the discontent of the people, resisted (his return) on (the south of) the Ho. <sup>32</sup> The (king's) five brothers had attended their mother in following him, and were waiting for him on the north of the Lo; and (when they heard of Yi's movement), all full of dissatisfaction, they related the Cautions of the great Yü <sup>33</sup> in the form of songs.

<sup>29</sup> This translation is quite bad and inexact. It should read, "Heaven hears and sees through (the ears and eyes) of our people. Heaven expresses its disapproval through the expressed disapproval of our people." Compare almost similar expression in a quotation by Mencius from the Great Declaration (q.v.).

<sup>30</sup> According to the Ancient Script, the document ends here, while the Modern Script combines it with another document (Yi and Chi), not reproduced in this volume.

<sup>31</sup> Emperor T'ai-k'ang, who reigned 2188-2160 B.C., had five brothers who revolted against him. The "critics" do not approve of the idea of fratricide from a moral point of view, and use it as an argument for the theory of "forgery" of this piece.

<sup>32</sup> The Yellow River.

<sup>33</sup> Their grandfather.

2. The first said,

'It was the lesson of our great ancestor:—

The people should be cherished,

And not looked down upon.<sup>34</sup>

The people are the root of a country;

The root firm, the country is tranquil.<sup>35</sup>

When I look at all under heaven,

Of the simple men and simple women,

Anyone may surpass me.

If the One man err repeatedly,

Should dissatisfaction be waited for till it appears?

Before it is seen, it should be guarded against.<sup>36</sup>

In my dealing with the millions of the people,

I should feel as much anxiety as if I were driving six horses with rotten reins.

The ruler of men—

How should he be but reverent (of his duties)?'

The second said,

'It is in the Lessons:—

When the place is a wild of lust,

And the country is a wild for hunting;

When spirits are liked, and music is the delight;

When there are lofty roofs and carved walls;—

The existence of any one of these things

Has never been but the prelude to ruin.'<sup>37</sup>

The third said,

'There was the lord of T'ao and T'ang,<sup>38</sup>

Who possessed this region of Chi.

Now we have fallen from his ways,

And thrown into confusion his rules and laws;—

The consequence is extinction and ruin.'

The fourth said,

'Brightly intelligent was our ancestor,

<sup>34</sup> Quotation given in a commentary on *Kuoyü* by Wei Chao (A.D. 204-273) as existing in the *Book of Hsia*, showing that Wei Chao knew this text, i.e., this text existed and was not unknown before Mei Cheh suddenly "forged" it in the following century.

<sup>35</sup> Huainantse (c. 178-122 B.C.) says, "People are to the state as the foundations are to the city wall."

<sup>36</sup> Quotations exist in *Tsochüan* and *Kuoyü*.

<sup>37</sup> Story of Yü's sayings given in *Chankuois'eh*.

<sup>38</sup> "T'ao T'ang" is the name of Yao's rule.

Sovereign of the myriad regions.  
 He had canons, he had patterns,  
 Which he transmitted to his posterity.  
 The standard stone and the equalizing quarter  
 Were in the royal treasury.  
 Wildly have we dropt the clue he gave us,  
 Overturning our temple, and extinguishing our sacrifices.'

The fifth said,  
 Oh! whither shall we turn?  
 The thoughts in my breast make me sad.  
 All the people are hostile to us;  
 On whom can we rely?  
 Anxieties crowd together in our hearts;  
 Thick as are our faces, they are covered with blushes.  
 We have not been careful of our virtue;  
 And though we repent, we cannot overtake the past.' <sup>39</sup>

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF T'ANG

*(Book of Shang, III. Ancient Script)*

1. When the king <sup>40</sup> returned from vanquishing Hsia and came to Po, he made a grand announcement to the myriad regions.

2. The king said, 'Ah! ye multitudes of the myriad regions, listen clearly to the announcement of me, the One man. The great God has conferred (even) on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right.<sup>41</sup> To make them tranquilly pursue the course which it would indicate is the work of the sovereign.

'The king of Hsia extinguished his virtue, and played the tyrant, extending his oppression over you, the people of the myriad regions. Suffering from his cruel injuries, and unable to endure the worm-wood and poison, you protested with one accord your innocence to the spirits

<sup>39</sup> Yen's accusation that "there is not enough rhyme" in these songs is entirely unfair.

<sup>40</sup> Emperor T'ang (reign 1783-1754 B.C.), founder of the Shang Dynasty, had just overthrown Chieh, the last emperor of Hsia, and returned to the capital. In this announcement to bid for the support of the princes and the people is first found the famous theory of the "mandate of Heaven," which is that the ruler rules the people for the people's good in a mandate from Heaven. The right to revolt, in contradiction to the doctrine of loyalty to the monarch, early puzzled the Confucianists, and this theory was the answer. Mencius fully developed it.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted by Hanfeitse as a saying of Confucius.

of heaven and earth. The way of Heaven is to bless the good, and make the bad miserable.<sup>42</sup> It sent down calamities on (the House of) Hsia, to make manifest its guilt. Therefore I, the little child, charged with the decree of Heaven and its bright terrors, did not dare to forgive (the criminal). I presumed to use a dark-coloured victim-bull, and, making clear announcement to the Spiritual Sovereign in the high heavens, requested leave to deal with the ruler of Hsia as a criminal. Then I sought for the great Sage, with whom I might unite my strength, to request the favour (of Heaven) for you, my multitudes. High Heaven truly showed its favour to the inferior people, and the criminal <sup>43</sup> has been degraded and subjected. What Heaven appoints is without error;—brilliantly (now), like the blossoming of plants and trees, the millions of the people show a true reviving.

3. 'It is given to me, the One man, to secure the harmony and tranquility of your states and clans; and now I know not whether I may not offend against (the Powers) above and below. I am fearful and trembling, as if I were in danger of falling into a deep abyss. Throughout all the regions that enter on a new life under me, do not, (ye princes), follow lawless ways; make no approach to insolence and dissoluteness; let every one be careful to keep his statutes;—that so we may receive the favour of Heaven. The good in you I will not dare to keep concealed; and for the evil in me I will not dare to forgive myself. I will examine these things in harmony with the mind of God. When guilt is found anywhere in you who occupy the myriad regions, let it rest on me, the One man. When guilt is found in me, the One man, it shall not attach to you who occupy the myriad regions.'<sup>44</sup>

'Oh! let us attain to be sincere in these things, and so we shall likewise have a (happy) consummation.'

## T'AI CHIA

(*Book of Shang, V. Ancient Script. Section I omitted here*)

### Section 2

1. On the first day of the twelfth month of his third year, Yi Yin <sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Parallel passages in *Tsochüan* and *Kuoyü*.

<sup>43</sup> Mencius says that when a ruler misrules, he is a common thief. Legge's translation of "inferior people" for "the people below" (i.e. on earth) is distinctly wrong.

<sup>44</sup> Quotation cited in the *Analects*, *Kuoyü*, *Motse* and *Shiki*. It is not found in the Speech of T'ang (Modern Script). In a case like this, Yen argues that T'ang did make this statement, but that it still must have been recorded in a lost Ancient Script, but not in the present spurious one!

<sup>45</sup> Yi Yin, exasperated at the conduct of the young king, had retired to the country in protest. Then the young king repented and went to see him.

escorted the young king in the royal cap and robes back to Po. (At the same time) he made the following writing:—

‘Without the sovereign, the people cannot have that guidance which is necessary to (the comfort of) their lives; without the people, the sovereign would have no sway over the four quarters (of the kingdom).<sup>46</sup> Great Heaven has graciously favoured the House of Shang, and granted to you, O young king, at last to become virtuous. This is indeed a blessing that will extend without limit to ten thousand generations.’

2. The king did obeisance with his face to his hands and his head to the ground saying, ‘I, the little child, was without understanding of what was virtuous, and was making myself one of the unworthy. By my desires I was setting at nought all rules of conduct, and violating by my self-indulgence all rules of propriety, and the result must have been speedy ruin to my person. Calamities sent by Heaven may be avoided, but from calamities brought on by one’s self there is no escape.<sup>47</sup> Heretofore I turned my back on the instructions of you, my tutor and guardian;—my beginning has been marked by incompetency. Let me still rely on your correcting and preserving virtue, keeping this in view that my end may be good!’

3. Yi Yin did obeisance with his face to his hands and his head on the ground, and said, ‘To cultivate his person, and by being sincerely virtuous, bring (all) below to harmonious concord with him;—this is the work of the intelligent sovereign. The former king was kind to the distressed and suffering, as if they were his children, and the people submitted to his commands,—all with sincere delight. Even in the states of the neighbouring princes, (the people) said, “We are waiting for our sovereign; when our sovereign comes, we shall not suffer the punishments (that we now do).”

‘O king, zealously cultivate your virtue. Regard (the example of) your meritorious grandfather. At no time allow yourself in pleasure and idleness. In worshipping your ancestors, think how you can prove your filial piety; in receiving your ministers, think how you can show yourself respectful; in looking to what is distant, try to get clear views; have your ears ever open to lessons of virtue;—then shall I acknowledge (and respond to) the excellence of your majesty with an untiring (devotion to your service).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> This sentence exists as a quotation from this document in *Shiki*.

<sup>47</sup> Exact words used by Mencius and in *Likei* as a quotation from this document.

<sup>48</sup> The whole spirit of Chinese history shows that emperors were restrained only by wise counsellors and public opinion from abusing their power. No Chinese ever thought of a *legal* restraint (constitution), as distinct from the moral restraint. Thus the development of the machinery of democracy was essentially different. The pattern of Chinese political ideas was already set in the *Book of History*.

## Section 3

1. Yi Yin again made an announcement to the king, saying, 'Oh! Heaven has no (partial) affection; <sup>49</sup>—only to those who are reverent does it show affection. The people are not constant to those whom they cherish;—they cherish (only) him who is benevolent. The spirits do not always accept the sacrifices that are offered to them;—they accept only the sacrifices of the sincere. A place of difficulty is the Heaven-(conferred) seat. When there are (those) virtues, good government is realized; when they are not, disorder comes. To maintain the same principles as those who secured good government will surely lead to prosperity; to pursue the courses of disorder will surely lead to ruin. He who at last, as at first, is careful as to whom and what he follows is a truly intelligent sovereign. The former king was always zealous in the reverent cultivation of his virtue, so that he was the fellow of God.<sup>50</sup> Now, O king, you have entered on the inheritance of his excellent line;—fix your inspection on him.'

2. '(Your course must be) as when in ascending high you begin from where it is low, and when in travelling far you begin from where it is near. Do not slight the occupations of the people;—think of their difficulties. Do not yield to a feeling of repose on your throne;—think of its perils. Be careful for the end at the beginning. When you hear words that are distasteful to your mind, you must enquire whether they be not right; when you hear words that accord with your own views, you must enquire whether they be not contrary to what is right. Oh! what attainment can be made without anxious thought? what achievement can be made without earnest effort? Let the One man be greatly good, and the myriad regions will be rectified by him.'<sup>51</sup>

3. 'When the sovereign does not with disputatious words throw the old rules of government into confusion, and the minister does not, for favour and gain, continue in an office whose work is done,—then the country will lastingly and surely enjoy happiness.'

## THE COMMON POSSESSION OF PURE VIRTUE

(*Book of Shang, VI. Ancient Script*)

1. Yi Yin, having returned the government into the hands of his sovereign, and being about to announce his retirement, set forth admonitions on the subject of virtue.

2. He said, 'Oh! it is difficult to rely on Heaven;—its appointments

<sup>49</sup> *Tsochüan* cites this as a quotation from the *Book of History*.

<sup>50</sup> The regular word for God, *Shangti*.

<sup>51</sup> Parallel passage in *Liké*.

are not constant.<sup>52</sup> (But if the sovereign see to it that) his virtue be constant, he will preserve his throne; if his virtue be not constant, the nine provinces will be lost by him. The king of Hsia could not maintain the virtue (of his ancestors) unchanged, but contemned the spirits and oppressed the people. Great Heaven no (longer) extended its protection to him. It looked out among the myriad regions to give its guidance to one who should receive its favouring appointment, fondly seeking (a possessor of) pure virtue, whom it might make lord of all the spirits. Then there were I, Yin, and T'ang, both possessed of pure virtue, and able to satisfy the mind of Heaven. He received (in consequence) the bright favour of Heaven,<sup>53</sup> so as to become possessor of the multitudes of the nine provinces, and proceeded to change Hsia's commencement of the year. It was not that Heaven had any private partiality for the lord of Shang;—it simply gave its favour to pure virtue. It was not that Shang sought (the allegiance of) the lower people;—the people simply turned to pure virtue. Where (the sovereign's) virtue is pure, his enterprises are all fortunate; where his virtue is wavering and uncertain, his enterprises are all unfortunate. Good and evil do not wrongly befall men, but Heaven sends down misery or happiness according to their conduct.'

3. 'Now, O young king, you are newly entering on your (great) appointment,—you should be seeking to make new your virtue. At last, as at first, have this as your one object, so shall you make a daily renovation. Let the officers whom you employ be men of virtue and ability, and let the ministers about you be the right men. The minister, in relation to (his sovereign) above him, has to promote his virtue, and, in relation to the (people) beneath him, has to seek their good. How hard must it be (to find the proper man)! what careful attention must be required! (Thereafter) there must be harmony (cultivated with him), and a oneness (of confidence placed in him).

'There is no invariable model of virtue;<sup>54</sup>—a supreme regard to what is good gives the model of it. There is no invariable characteristic of what is good that is to be supremely regarded;—it is found where there is a conformity to the uniform consciousness (in regard to what is good). (Such virtue) will make the people with their myriad surnames all say, "How great are the words of the king!" and also, "How single and pure is the king's heart!" It will avail to maintain in tranquillity the rich possession of the former king, and to secure for ever the (happy) life of the multitudes of the people.'

<sup>52</sup> This statement is repeated elsewhere in the *Book of History* (Prince Shih: Modern Script) and in the Great Odes of the *Book of Poetry*. For "appointments" read "mandate." The idea is that the ruler's right to rule may be easily forfeited by misconduct.

<sup>53</sup> Should read: "received the clear mandate of Heaven."

<sup>54</sup> Parallel in the *Analects*.



4. 'Oh! (to retain a place) in the seven-shrined temple<sup>55</sup> of ancestors is a sufficient witness of virtue. To be acknowledged as chief by the myriad heads of families is a sufficient evidence of one's government. The sovereign without the people has none whom he can employ; and the people without the sovereign have none whom they can serve.<sup>56</sup> Do not think yourself so large as to deem others small. If ordinary men and women do not find the opportunity to give full development to their ability, the people's lord will be without the proper aids to complete his merit.'

## THE CHARGE TO YÜEH

(*Book of Shang, VIII. Ancient Script*)

### Section I

1. The king<sup>57</sup> passed the season of sorrow in the mourning shed for three years, and when the period of mourning was over, he (still) did not speak (to give any commands). All the ministers remonstrated with him, saying, 'Oh! him who is (the first) to apprehend we pronounce intelligent, and the intelligent man is the model for others. The Son of Heaven rules over the myriad regions, and all the officers look up to and reverence him. They are the king's words which form the commands (for them). If he do not speak, the ministers have no way to receive their orders.' On this the king made a writing, for their information, to the following effect:—'As it is mine to serve as the director for the four quarters (of the kingdom), I have been afraid that my virtue is not equal to (that of my predecessors), and therefore have not spoken. (But) while I was reverently and silently thinking of the (right) way, I dreamt that God gave me a good assistant who should speak for me.' He then minutely recalled the appearance (of the person whom he had seen), and caused search to be made for him everywhere by means of a picture. Yüeh,<sup>58</sup> a builder in the wild country of Fu-yen, was found like to it.

2. On this the king raised and made (Yüeh) his prime minister, keeping him (also) at his side.

He charged him, saying, 'Morning and evening present your instructions to aid my virtue. Suppose me a weapon of steel;—I will use you for a whetstone. Suppose me crossing a great stream;—I will use you for a boat with its oars. Suppose me in a year of great drought;—I will

<sup>55</sup> A point of great contention (five or seven shrines) between the students of the Ancient and the Modern Script, pointed out as evidence that Wang Shu forged this book.

<sup>56</sup> Quotation cited in *Kuoyü* as from the *Book of Hsia*.

<sup>57</sup> Wu-ting, the twentieth sovereign of Shang, 1324-1266 B.C.

<sup>58</sup> Fu Yüeh, who became one of the best ministers of the Dynasty, also credited with being a poet.

use you as a copious rain. Open your mind, and enrich my mind. (Be you) like medicine, which must distress the patient, in order to cure his sickness.<sup>59</sup> (Think of me) as one walking barefoot, whose feet are sure to be wounded, if he do not see the ground.

'Do you and your companions all cherish the same mind to assist your sovereign, that I may follow my royal predecessors, and tread in the steps of my high ancestor, to give repose to the millions of the people. Oh! respect this charge of mine;—so shall you bring your work to a (good) end.'

3. Yüeh replied to the king, saying, 'Wood by the use of the line is made straight, and the sovereign who follows reproof is made sage. When the sovereign can (thus) make himself sage, his ministers, without being specially commanded, anticipate his orders;—who would dare not to act in respectful compliance with this excellent charge of your Majesty?'

## Section 2

1. Yüeh having received his charge, and taken the presidency of all the officers, he presented himself before the king, and said, 'Oh! intelligent kings act in reverence accordance with the ways of Heaven. The founding of states and the setting up of capitals, the appointing of sovereign kings, of dukes and other nobles, with their great officers and heads of departments, were not designed to minister to the idleness and pleasures (of one), but for the good government of the people.<sup>60</sup> It is Heaven which is all-intelligent and observing;—let the sage (king) take it as his pattern. Then his ministers will reverently accord with him, and the people consequently will be well governed.

'It is the mouth that gives occasion for shame; they are <sup>61</sup> the coat of mail and helmet that give occasion to war. The upper robes and lower garments (for reward should not be lightly taken from) their chests; before spear and shield are used, one should examine himself. If your Majesty will be cautious in regard to these things, and, believing this about them, attain to the intelligent use of them, (your government) will in everything be excellent. Good government and bad depend on the various officers. Offices should not be given to men because they are favourites, but only to men of ability. Dignities should not be conferred on men of evil practices, but only on men of worth.<sup>62</sup>

'Anxious thought about what will be best should precede your move-

<sup>59</sup> Quoted by Mencius.

<sup>60</sup> Similar ideas, with different wording, were expressed by Motse.

<sup>61</sup> Should be rendered, "It is."

<sup>62</sup> Later this became a typical tenet of the Confucian school.

ments, which also should be taken at the time proper for them. Indulging the consciousness of being good is the way to lose that goodness; being vain of one's ability is the way to lose the merit it might produce.<sup>63</sup>

'For all affairs let there be adequate preparation;—with preparation there will be no calamitous issue. Do not open the door for favourites, from whom you will receive contempt. Do not be ashamed of mistakes, and (go on to) make them crimes. Let your mind rest in its proper objects, and the affairs of your government will be pure. Officiousness in sacrificing is called irreverence; and multiplying ceremonies leads to disorder. To serve the spirits acceptably (in this way) is difficult.'

2. The king said, 'Excellent! your words, O Yüeh, should indeed be put in practice (by me). If you were not so good in counsel, I should not have heard these rules for my conduct.' Yüeh did obeisance with his head to the ground, and said, 'It is not the knowing that is difficult, but the doing.'<sup>64</sup> (But) since your Majesty truly knows this, there will not be the difficulty, and you will become really equal in complete virtue to our first king. Wherein I, Yüeh, refrain from speaking (what I ought to speak), the blame will rest with me.'

### Section 3

1. The king said, 'Come, O Yüeh. I, the little one, first learned with Kan P'an. Afterwards I lived concealed among the rude countrymen, and then I went to (the country) inside the Ho, and lived there. From the Ho I went to Po;—and the result has been that I am unenlightened. Do you teach me what should be my aims. Be to me as the yeast and the malt in making sweet spirits, as the salt and the prunes in making agreeable soup.'<sup>65</sup> Use various methods to cultivate me; do not cast me away;—so shall I attain to practise your instructions.'

Yüeh said, 'O king, a ruler should seek to learn much (from his ministers), with a view to establish his affairs; but to learn the lessons of the ancients is the way to attain this. That the affairs of one, not making the ancients his masters, can be perpetuated for generations, is what I have not heard.

'In learning there should be a humble mind and the maintenance of a constant earnestness;—in such a case (the learner's) improvement will surely come. He who sincerely cherishes these things will find all truth accumulating in his person. Teaching is the half of learning;<sup>66</sup> when a

<sup>63</sup> Later became an important Taoist idea; see *Laotse*.

<sup>64</sup> Also found in *Tsochuan*. This became a proverb. Sun Yat-sen, preaching action, reverses it

<sup>65</sup> See similar interesting analogy used by the king in Section 1. This, being not taken from quotations, seems to speak for its authenticity.

<sup>66</sup> Famous proverb on education, also found in the chapter on Education in *Liki*

states, and all ye my officers, managers of my affairs, hearken clearly to my declaration.

'Heaven and earth is the parent of all creatures; <sup>71</sup> and of all creatures man is the most highly endowed. The sincerely intelligent (among men) becomes the great sovereign; and the great sovereign is the parent of the people. <sup>72</sup> But now, Shou, <sup>73</sup> the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above, and inflicts calamities on the people below. Abandoned to drunkenness and reckless in lust, he has dared to exercise cruel oppression. He has extended the punishment of offenders to all their relatives. He has put men into offices on the hereditary principle. He has made it his pursuit to have palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances, to the most painful injury of you, the myriads of the people. He has burned and roasted the loyal and good. He has ripped up pregnant women. Great Heaven was moved with indignation, and charged my deceased father Wen to display its terrors; but (he died) before the work was completed.

'On this account, I, Fa, the little child, have by means of you, the hereditary rulers of my friendly states, contemplated the government of Shang; but Shou has no repentant heart. He sits squatting on his heels, not serving God nor the spirits of heaven and earth, neglecting also the temple of his ancestors, and not sacrificing in it. The victims and the vessels of millet all become the prey of wicked robbers, and still he says, "The people are mine; the (heavenly) appointment is mine," never trying to correct his contemptuous mind.

'Heaven, for the help of the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to be aiding to God, and secure the tranquillity of the four quarters (of the kingdom). In regard to who are criminals and who are not, how dare I give any allowance to my own wishes? <sup>74</sup>

' "Where the strength is the same, measure the virtue of the parties; where the virtue is the same, measure their righteousness." Shou has hundreds of thousands and myriads of officers, but they have hundreds of thousands and myriads of minds; I have (but) three thousand officers, but they have one mind. <sup>75</sup> The iniquity of Shang is full. Heaven gives command to destroy it. If I did not obey Heaven, my iniquity would be as great.

'I, the little child, early and late am filled with apprehensions. I have

<sup>71</sup> Compare Chuangtse's essay, "The Great Supreme," where the same idea is expressed in the conversation of the four friends.

<sup>72</sup> Origin of the theory of "parental government." Also expressed in the Great Plan, a chapter of the *Book of History* not reproduced in this volume.

<sup>73</sup> Another name for Chou, or its variant.

<sup>74</sup> Cited by Mencius in almost identical words.

<sup>75</sup> Cited by Kuantse.

received the command of my deceased father Wen; I have offered special sacrifice to God; I have performed the due services to the great earth; and I lead the multitude of you to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to.<sup>76</sup> Do you aid me, the One man, to cleanse for ever (all within) the four seas. Now is the time!—It should not be lost.'

## Section 2

On (the day) Wu-wu, the king halted on the north on the Ho. When all the princes with their hosts were assembled, the king reviewed the hosts, and made the following declaration:—'Oh! ye multitudes of the west, hearken all to my words.

'I have heard that the good man, doing good, finds the day insufficient; and that the evil man, doing evil, also finds the day insufficient.<sup>77</sup> Now Shou, the king of Shang, with strength pursues his lawless way. He has driven away the time-worn sires; and cultivates intimacies with wicked men. Dissolute, intemperate, reckless, oppressive, his ministers have become assimilated to him; and they form combinations and contract animosities, and depend on their power to exterminate one another. The innocent cry to Heaven. The odour of such a state is felt on high.

'Heaven loves the people, and the sovereign should reverently carry out (this mind of) Heaven. Chieh,<sup>78</sup> the sovereign of Hsia, would not follow the example of Heaven, but sent forth his poisonous injuries through the states of the kingdom:—Heaven therefore gave its aid to T'ang the Successful, and charged him to make an end of the appointment of Hsia. But the crimes of Shou exceed those of Chieh. He has degraded from office the greatly good man; he has behaved with cruel tyranny to his reprover and helper. He says that with him is the appointment of Heaven;<sup>79</sup> he says that a reverent care of his conduct is not worth observing; he says that sacrifice is of no use; he says that tyranny is no harm. The beacon for him to look to was not far off;—it was that king of Hsia. It would seem that Heaven is going by means of me to rule the people. My dreams coincide with my divinations; the auspicious omen is double. My attack on Shang must succeed.

'Shou has hundreds of thousands and millions of ordinary men, divided

<sup>76</sup> Twice quoted by *Kuoyü* and once by *Tsochüan*. This translation is not good enough. Literally: "What the people desire, Heaven will follow;" or "Heaven follows the people's will."

<sup>77</sup> Parallels in *Tsochüan* and the *Book of Poetry*.

<sup>78</sup> The last emperor of Hsia, who was similarly dissolute. This was a reminder to the Shang people that their first ruler also had revolted against a tyrant emperor.

<sup>79</sup> That is, the mandate of Heaven.

in heart and divided in practice;—I have of ministers, able to govern, ten men, one in heart and one in practice.<sup>80</sup> Though he has his nearest relatives with him, they are not like my virtuous men.<sup>81</sup> Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear.<sup>82</sup> The people are blaming me, the One man, for my delay;—I must now go forward. My military prowess is displayed, and I enter his territories to take the wicked tyrant. My punishment (of evil) will be great, and more glorious than that executed by T'ang. Rouse ye, my heroes! Do not think that he is not to be feared;—better think that he cannot be withstood. (His) people stand in trembling awe of him, as if the horns were falling from their heads. Oh! unite your energies, unite your hearts;—so shall you forthwith surely accomplish the work, to last for all ages!

### Section 3

The time was on the morrow,<sup>83</sup> when the king went round his six hosts in state, and made a clear declaration to all his officers. He said, 'Oh! my valiant men of the west, from Heaven are the illustrious courses of duty, of which the (several) requirements are quite plain. And now Shou, the king of Shang, treats with contemptuous slight the five regular (virtues), and abandons himself to wild idleness and irreverence. He has cut himself off from Heaven, and brought enmity between himself and the people.'

'He cut through the leg-bones of those who were wading in the morning; he cut out the heart of the worthy man. By the use of his power, killing and murdering, he has poisoned and sickened all within the four seas. His honours and confidence are given to the villainous and bad. He has driven from him his instructors and guardians. He has thrown to the winds the statutes and penal laws. He has imprisoned and enslaved the upright officer. He neglects the sacrifices to heaven and earth. He has discontinued the offerings in the ancestral temple. He makes contrivances of wonderful device and extraordinary cunning to please his wife.—God will no longer indulge him, but with a curse is sending down on him this ruin. Do ye with untiring zeal support me, the One man, reverently to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. The ancients have said, "He who soothes us is our sovereign; he who oppresses us is our enemy."<sup>84</sup> This solitary fellow Shou, having exercised great tyranny,

<sup>80</sup> Cited by *Tsochian* and *Analects*.

<sup>81</sup> Cited by *Analects* and *Motse*.

<sup>82</sup> This most important statement is cited by Mencius. The people are the representatives of Heaven, or God, and the people's voice is God's voice. Hence the importance of public opinion as the basis of any true government. See my *History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Univ. of Chicago Press).

<sup>83</sup> Really, the next dawn.

<sup>84</sup> See *Mencius* (Bk. IV, Pt. 2, III, 1).

is your perpetual enemy. (It is said again), "In planting (a man's) virtue, strive to make it great; in putting away (a man's) wickedness, strive to do it from the roots." <sup>85</sup> Here I, the little child, by the powerful help of you, all my officers, will utterly exterminate your enemy. Do you, all my officers, march forward with determined boldness to sustain your prince. Where there is much merit, there shall be large reward; where you do not so advance, there shall be conspicuous disgrace.

'Oh! (the virtue of) my deceased father Wen was like the shining of the sun and moon. His brightness extended over the four quarters of the land, and shone signally in the western region. Hence it is that our Chou has received (the allegiance of) many states. If I subdue Shou, it will not be from my prowess, but from the faultless (virtue of) my deceased father Wen. If Shou subdue me, it will not be from any fault of my deceased father Wen, but because I, the little child, am not good.'

## THE METAL-BOUND COFFER

(*Book of Chou, VI. Modern and Ancient Scripts*)

1. Two years after the conquest of Shang <sup>86</sup> the king fell ill, and was quite disconsolate. The two (other great) dukes <sup>87</sup> said, 'Let us reverently consult the tortoise-shell about the king'; but the Duke of Chou <sup>88</sup> said, 'You must not so distress our former kings.' He then took the business on himself, and reared three altars of earth on the same cleared space; and having made another altar on the south of these, and facing the north, he took there his own position. Having put a round symbol of jade (on each of the three altars), and holding in his hands the lengthened symbol (of his own rank), he addressed the kings T'ai, Chi and Wen. <sup>89</sup>

The (grand) historiographer had written on tablets his prayer, which was to this effect <sup>90</sup>:—'A.B., <sup>91</sup> your great descendant, is suffering from a severe and violent disease;—if you three kings have in heaven the charge of (watching over) him, (Heaven's) great son, let me Tan be a substitute

<sup>85</sup> Cited as a proverb by Wu Yüan in *Tsochüan*.

<sup>86</sup> 1121, or 1120 B.C.

<sup>87</sup> The Duke of Shao and T'ai-kung.

<sup>88</sup> The Duke of Chou, King Wu's brother, considered by Confucius to have laid down the governmental system and general pattern of rituals and music of the Chou Dynasty. Confucius said he often dreamed of him, which means it was Confucius' dream to restore the social order which had gone into decay in his time.

<sup>89</sup> Ancestors of the king.

<sup>90</sup> The Duke of Chou offered to die in his brother's place.

<sup>91</sup> Literally, "So-and-So," standing for King Wu's name.

for his person. I was lovingly obedient to my father; I am possessed of many abilities and arts, which fit me to serve spiritual beings. Your great descendant, on the other hand, has not so many abilities and arts as I, and is not so capable of serving spiritual beings. And moreover he was appointed in the hall of God to extend his aid all over the kingdom, so that he might establish your descendants in this lower earth. The people of the four quarters all stand in reverent awe of him. Oh! do not let that precious Heaven-conferred appointment fall to the ground, and (all the long line of) our former kings will also have one in whom they can never rest at our sacrifices. I will now seek for your determination (in this matter) from the great tortoise-shell. If you grant me (my request), I will take these symbols and this mace, and return and wait for your orders. If you do not grant it, I will put them by.'

The duke then divined with the three tortoise-shells, and all were favourable. He opened with a key the place where the (oracular) responses were kept, and looked at them, and they also were favourable. He said, 'According to the form (of the prognostic) the king will take no injury. I, the little child, have got the renewal of his appointment from the three kings, by whom a long futurity has been consulted for. I have now to wait for the issue. They can provide for our One man.'

When the duke returned, he placed the tablets (of the prayer) in a metal-bound coffer, and next day the king got better.

2. (Afterwards), upon the death of King Wu, (the duke's) elder brother, he of Kuan, and his younger brothers, spread a baseless report through the kingdom, to the effect that the duke would do no good to the (king's) young son.<sup>92</sup> On this the duke said to the two (other great) dukes, 'If I do not take the law (to these men), I shall not be able to make my report to the former kings.'

He resided (accordingly) in the east for two years, when the criminals were taken and (brought to justice). Afterwards he made a poem to present to the king, and called it 'the Owl.'<sup>93</sup> The king on his part did not dare to blame the duke.

In the autumn, when the grain was abundant and ripe, but before it was reaped, Heaven sent a great storm of thunder and lightning, along with wind, by which the grain was all broken down, and great trees torn up. The people were greatly terrified; and the king and great officers, all in their caps of state, proceeded to open the metal-bound coffer and examine the writings in it, where they found the words of the duke when he took on himself the business of being a substitute for King Wu.

<sup>92</sup> King Ch'eng. The Duke, his uncle, was under suspicion of intending to rob him of his throne.

<sup>93</sup> See the poem by the same name in the *Book of Poetry* (under "Some Great Ancient Poems" in this volume).



The two (great) dukes and the king asked the historiographer and all the other officers (acquainted with the transaction) about the thing, and they replied, 'It was really thus; but ah! the duke charged us that we should not presume to speak about it.' The king held the writing in his hand, and wept, saying, 'We need not (now) go on reverently to divine. Formerly the duke was thus earnest for the royal House, but I, being a child, did not know it. Now Heaven has moved its terrors to display his virtue. That I, the little child, (now) go with my new views and feelings to meet him, is what the rules of propriety of our kingdom require.'

The king then went out to the borders (to meet the duke), when Heaven sent down rain, and, by virtue of a contrary wind, the grain all rose up. The two (great) dukes gave orders to the people to take up the trees that had fallen and replace them. The year then turned out very fruitful.

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DUKE OF SHAO <sup>94</sup>

(*Book of Chou, XII. Modern and Ancient Script*)

1. In the second month, on the day Yi-wei, six days after full moon, the king <sup>95</sup> proceeded in the morning from Chou to Fang. (Thence) the Grand-Guardian <sup>96</sup> went before the Duke of Chou to survey the locality (of the new capital); and in the third month, on the day Wu-shan, the third day after the first appearance of the moon on Ping-wu, he came in the morning to Lo. He divined by the tortoise-shell about the (several) localities, and having obtained favourable indications, he set about laying out the plan (of the city). On Keng-hsü, the third day after, he led the people of Yin to prepare the various sites on the north of the Lo; and this work was completed on Chia-yin, the fifth day after.

On Yi-mao, the day following, the duke of Chou came in the morning to Lo, and thoroughly inspected the plan of the new city. On Ting-sze, the third day after, he offered two bulls as victims in the (northern and southern) suburbs; and on the morrow, Wu-wu, at the altar to the spirit of the land in the new city, he sacrificed a bull, a ram, and a boar. After seven days, on Chia-tse, in the morning, from his written (specifications) he gave their several orders to the people of Yin, <sup>97</sup> and to the presiding chiefs of the princes from the Hou, Tien, and Nan domains.

<sup>94</sup> This document contains the clearest exposition of the "mandate of Heaven" and how it changes from hand to hand. Those interested in pursuing the theory of the "mandate of Heaven," to which there are many references, may read Ch. 14, 16, 18 of the Book of Chou, in the *Shu King* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. III) in the same translation by James Legge.

<sup>95</sup> King Ch'eng, the second sovereign of Chou (1115-1079 B.C.), son of King Wu.

<sup>96</sup> Duke of Shao.

<sup>97</sup> The new capital Lo (near modern Loyang) lay very near the territory of the conquered Yin (or Shang) people.

When the people of Yin had thus received their orders, they arose and entered with vigour on their work.

(When the work was drawing to a completion), the Grand-Guardian went out with the hereditary princes of the various states to bring their offerings (for the king); and when he entered again, he gave them to the duke of Chou, saying, 'With my hands to my head and my head to the ground, I present these to his Majesty and your Grace. Announcements for the information of the multitudes of Yin must come from you, with whom is the management of affairs.'

2. 'Oh! God (dwelling in) the great heavens has changed his decree respecting his great son and the great dynasty of Yin.<sup>98</sup> Our king has received that decree. Unbounded is the happiness connected with it, and unbounded is the anxiety:—Oh! how can he be other than reverent?

'When Heaven rejected and made an end of the decree in favour of the great dynasty of Yin, there were many of its former wise kings in heaven. The king, however, who had succeeded to them, the last of his race, from the time of his entering into their appointment, proceeded in such a way as at last to keep the wise in obscurity and the vicious in office. The poor people in such a case, carrying their children and leading their wives, made their moan to Heaven. They even fled away, but were apprehended again. Oh! Heaven had compassion on the people of the four quarters; its favouring decree lighted on our earnest (founders). Let the king sedulously cultivate the virtue of reverence.

'Examining the men of antiquity, there was the (founder of the) Hsia dynasty. Heaven guided (his mind), allowed his descendants (to succeed him), and protected them. He acquainted himself with Heaven, and was obedient to it. But in process of time the decree in his favour fell to the ground.<sup>99</sup> So also is it now when we examine the case of Yin. There was the same guiding (of its founder), who corrected (the errors of Hsia), and (whose descendants) enjoyed the protection (of Heaven). He (also) acquainted himself with Heaven, and was obedient to it. But now the decree in favour of him has fallen to the ground. Our king has now come to the throne in his youth;—let him not slight the aged and experienced, for it may be said of them that they have studied the virtuous conduct of the ancients, and have matured their counsels in the sight of Heaven.

'Oh! although the king is young, yet he is the great son (of God). Let him effect a great harmony with the lower people, and that will be the blessing of the present time. Let not the king presume to be remiss

<sup>98</sup> Or Shang.

<sup>99</sup> This changing of the mandate of Heaven became the established explanation or justification for the change of dynasties. In modern Chinese, the word for "revolution" means to "change mandate."

in this, but continually regard and stand in awe of the perilous (uncertainty) of the people's (attachment).

'Let the king come here as the vice-regent of God, and undertake (the duties of government) in this centre of the land. Tan said, "Now that this great city has been built, from henceforth he may be the mate of great Heaven, and reverently sacrifice to (the spirits) above and beneath; from henceforth he may from this central spot administer successful government." Thus shall the king enjoy the favouring regard (of Heaven) all-complete, and the government of the people will now be prosperous.

'Let the king first subdue to himself those who were the managers of affairs under Yin, associating them with the managers of affairs for our Chou. This will regulate their (perverse) natures, and they will make daily advancement. Let the king make reverence the resting-place (of his mind);—he must maintain the virtue of reverence.

'We should by all means survey the dynasties of Hsia and Yin. I do not presume to know and say, "The dynasty of Hsia was to enjoy the favouring decree of Heaven just for (so many) years," nor do I presume to know and say, "It could not continue longer." The fact simply was, that, for want of the virtue of reverence, the decree in its favour prematurely fell to the ground. (Similarly), I do not presume to know and say, "The dynasty of Yin was to enjoy the favouring decree of Heaven just for (so many) years," nor do I presume to know and say, "It could not continue longer." The fact simply was, that, for want of the virtue of reverence, the decree in its favour fell prematurely to the ground. The king has now inherited the decree,—the same decree, I consider, which belonged to those two dynasties. Let him seek to inherit (the virtues of) their meritorious (sovereigns);—(let him do this especially) at this commencement of his duties.

'Oh! it is as on the birth of a son, when all depends on (the training of) his early life, through which he may secure his wisdom in the future, as if it were decreed to him. Now Heaven may have decreed wisdom (to the king); it may have decreed good fortune or bad; it may have decreed a (long) course of years;—we only know that now is with him the commencement of his duties. Dwelling in this new city, let the king now sedulously cultivate the virtue of reverence. When he is all-devoted to this virtue, he may pray to Heaven for a long-abiding decree in his favour.

'In the position of king, let him not, because of the excesses of the people in violation of the laws, presume also to rule by the violent infliction of death;—when the people are regulated gently, the merit (of government) is seen. It is for him who is in the position of king to

overtop all with his virtue. In this case the people will imitate him throughout the kingdom, and he will become still more illustrious.<sup>100</sup>

'Let the king and his ministers labour with a mutual sympathy, saying, "We have received the decree of Heaven, and it shall be great as the long-continued years of Hsia;—yea, it shall not fail of the long-continued years of Yin." I wish the king, through (the attachment of) the lower people, to receive the long-abiding decree of Heaven.'

3. (The duke of Shao) then did obeisance with his hands to his head and his head to the ground, and said, 'I, a small minister, presume, with the king's (heretofore) hostile people and all their officers, and with his (loyal) friendly people, to maintain and receive his majesty's dread command and brilliant virtue. That the king should finally obtain the decree all-complete, and that he should become illustrious,—this I do not presume to labour for. I only bring respectfully these offerings to present to his majesty, to be used in his prayers to Heaven for its long-abiding decree.'<sup>101</sup>

## THE SPEECH OF (THE MARQUIS OF) CH'IN<sup>102</sup>

(*Book of Chou, XXX. Modern and Ancient Scripts*)

Introduction by James Legge

THE state of Ch'in, at the time to which this speech belongs, was one of the most powerful in the kingdom, and already giving promise of what it would grow to. Ultimately, one of its princes overthrew the dynasty of Chou, and brought feudal China to an end.

Ch'in and Chin were engaged together in 631 B.C. in besieging the capital of Cheng, and threatened to extinguish that state. The marquis of Ch'in, however, was suddenly induced to withdraw his troops, leaving three of his officers in friendly relations with the court of Cheng, and under engagement to defend the state from aggression. These men played the part of spies in the interest of Ch'in, and 629 B.C., one of them, called Chi-tse, sent word that he was in charge of one of the gates, and if an army were sent to surprise the capital, Cheng might be added to the territories of Ch'in. The marquis—known in history as duke Mu—laid the matter before his

<sup>100</sup> Here we see the source of Confucius' ideas of government by moral example.

<sup>101</sup> It is interesting to note the existence of the hostile conquered peoples, and to see how the Chou Dynasty ruled and united China for almost nine hundred years, and was thus able to stamp its own culture upon China as a whole.

<sup>102</sup> This is the last document of the *Book of History*, bringing it down to 628 B.C.

counsellors. The most experienced of them—Paili Hsi and Chien-shu—were against taking advantage of the proposed treachery; but the marquis listened rather to the promptings of ambition; and the next year he sent a large force, under his three ablest commanders, hoping to find Cheng unprepared for any resistance. The attempt, however, failed; and the army, on its way back to Ch'in, was attacked by the forces of Chin, and sustained a terrible defeat. It was nearly annihilated, and the three commanders were taken prisoners.

The marquis of Chin was intending to put these captives to death, but finally sent them to Ch'in, that duke Mu might himself sacrifice them to his anger for their want of success. Mu, however, did no such thing. He went from his capital to meet the disgraced generals, and comforted them, saying that the blame of their defeat was due to himself, who had refused to listen to the advice of his wise counsellors. Then also, it is said, he made the speech here preserved for the benefit of all his ministers, describing the good and bad minister, and the different issues of listening to them, and deploring how he had himself foolishly rejected the advice of his aged counsellors, and followed that of new men;—a thing which he would never do again.

The duke said, 'Ah! my officers, listen to me without noise. I solemnly announce to you the most important of all sayings. (It is this which) the ancients have said, "Thus it is with all people,—they mostly love their ease. In reproving others there is no difficulty, but to receive reproof, and allow it to have free course,—this is difficult." The sorrow of my heart is, that the days and months have passed away, and it is not likely they will come again (so that I might pursue a different course).

"There were my old counsellors.—I said, "They will not accommodate themselves to me," and I hated them. There were my new counsellors, and I would for the time give my confidence to them. So indeed it was with me; but hereafter I will take advice from the men of yellow hair, and then I shall be free from error. That good old officer!—his strength is exhausted, but I would rather have him (as my counsellor). That dashing brave officer!—his shooting and charioteering are faultless, but I would rather not wish to have him. As to men of quibbles, skilful at cunning words, and able to make the good man change his purposes, what have I to do to make much use of them?

"I have deeply thought and concluded.—Let me have but one resolute minister, plain and sincere, without other ability, but having a straight-forward mind, and possessed of generosity, regarding the talents of others as if he himself possessed them; and when he finds accomplished and sage men, loving them in his heart more than his mouth expresses, really showing himself able to bear them:—such a minister would be

able to preserve my descendants and people, and would indeed be a giver of benefits.

‘But if (the minister), when he finds men of ability, be jealous and hates them; if, when he finds accomplished and sage men, he oppose them and does not allow their advancement, showing himself really not able to bear them:—such a man will not be able to protect my descendants and people; and will he not be a dangerous man?’

‘The decline and fall of a state may arise from one man. The glory and tranquillity of a state may also arise from the goodness of one man.’

# Mencius

## The Democratic Philosopher

### INTRODUCTION

MENCIUS lived in 372–289 B.C., and was thus a contemporary of Plato who lived in 427–347 B.C., and of Aristotle who lived in 386–322 B.C. His birth was separated from the death of Confucius in 479 B.C. by 107 years, and he was about one generation older than Hsüntse who lived in 315–235 B.C., as Plato was that much older than Aristotle. His position in relation to Confucius was like that of Plato in relation to Socrates in developing the idealistic trends, while Hsüntse was in a sense similar to Aristotle in his philosophic realism. The analogy must not be forced; the chief difference between Mencius and Hsüntse was that Mencius believed in the innate goodness of human nature, while Hsüntse believed in its badness. Consequently Hsüntse believed in culture and restraint, while Mencius believed that culture consisted in seeking and retrieving the original goodness of man. “A great man is one who has not lost the child’s heart.” He tried to prove that the sense of mercy and the desire to do what is right are innate and instinctive, as when we instinctively rush forward to save a child crawling toward a well. Wickedness in human conduct is like the denuding of a hill by the woodsman’s axe and grazing cattle, while it is the nature of a hill to be finely wooded. This original goodness could be developed or obstructed, but we all have it in ourselves to be like the Sages. “All men could be Yao and Shun.” “The Sages are of the same species as ourselves.” One of his best sayings is: “The sense of mercy is in all men; the sense of shame is in all men; the sense of courtesy and respect is in all men; the sense of right and wrong is in all men.” He believed in the distinction between the human and the beastly in us, and that the

distinctly human in us consists in the sense of mercy, the sense of right and wrong, etc. "He who has no sense of mercy is not a man, etc." He also admitted that the distinction between man and beast was "very small," but he urged that there is a greater self and a smaller self in us, and that "He who attends to his smaller self becomes a small man, and he who attends to his greater self becomes a great man."

Consequently there was a certain high idealism in Mencius, when he spoke of the *haojan chih ch'i*, the "expansive spirit" in us, which he beautifully pinned down in a phrase, "the air of the early dawn," which every early riser is familiar with. How to save and keep that air, or spirit, of the early dawn through the day, or how to guard the warm and good heart of the child through our life is the moral problem.

The definite contributions of Mencius' ideas to the democratic principle are as follows. First, that all men are equal. "The Sages are of the same species as ourselves." (Bk. VI, Pt. 1, VII, 3.) Second, of the three elements of a state, "the people are the most important . . . and the ruler is the least important" (Bk. VII, Pt. 2, XIV, 1). Third, decisions of promotion and punishment are to be based not on what the government officials say, but on what all the people say (Bk. I, Pt. 2, VII, 4-5). Fourth, government must be for the welfare of the people, and the king must share his pleasures (parks and music) with the people (Bk. I, entire Part 1). Fifth, the relationships of the ruler and the people are reciprocal. "When a ruler regards his ministers as his hands and feet, they regard him as their belly and heart; when he regards them as dogs and horses, they regard him as a common citizen; when he regards them as dirt and grass, they regard him as a robber and enemy (Bk. IV, Pt. 2, III, 1). Sixth, consequently, the right to revolt was vindicated. When T'ang's right to rebel against the tyrant emperor Chieh was questioned, he replied that the tyrant was a common thief (Bk. I, Pt. 2, VIII, 3). Finally, Mencius constantly elaborated the idea in the *Book of History* that the emperor ruled his country as a "mandate from Heaven" and forfeited it as soon as he misruled. Ultimately anyone rules only because the people accept him (Bk. V, Pt. 1, V, 1-8).

From his general idealism, Mencius developed the theory of "benevolent government," which became the keystone of Chinese political philosophy. He also developed the sharp distinction between the "royal way" and the "dictator's way," or between government by winning the people's hearts and government by force; incidentally the "royal way" (*wangtao*) is what the Japanese say they are trying to set up in Manchuria. His idea of "parental government" was not original with him, but was already current in the Chinese tradition, as may be seen in the *Book of History*. The importance of Mencius arises from his



extensive influence, holding a position in Chinese eyes next only to Confucius, his books being compulsory reading in elementary schools, committed to memory by all Chinese school children. Consequently, the theory of the "benevolent government" became an ideal held up by Chinese scholars, even as democracy is held up as an ideal by the Western democracies. That this ideal was not lived up to in times of a decaying dynasty is evident enough; over-taxation, wars, conscription and interference with the farmers' cultivation of the land were too evident in Mencius' own times and provided the very background against which he announced the benevolent government as a sure, unfailing remedy. Nevertheless, it was always held up as an ideal and profoundly influenced the whole character of Chinese government in times of peace. In fact, Chinese philosophy of history is firm on the fact that the very length of a dynasty's rule is in exact proportion to the kind of "kind and lenient government" that dynasty started out with.

I have used here the revised translation of 1875 by James Legge, and have not interfered with his text except in the correction of his Cantonese spelling of proper names. I regret, however, that Legge's translation is too literal to make easy reading; his methods amounted to translating every single word, even when two words formed a combination with a new meaning. This may be considered the general rule, that when we find a translation difficult to read, it is sure to be scholarly. Thus, to take a sentence much quoted by the Chinese in the present war, Legge rendered it thus, "Opportunities of time (vouchsafed by) Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation (afforded by) the Earth, and advantages of situation (afforded by) the Earth are not equal to (the union arising from) the accord of Men." This is literal enough, but what Mencius said was much briefer, in twelve Chinese words: "Weather is less important than terrain, and terrain is less important than the people's unity." This is no less literal, because "sky-times," or worse, "Heaven-opportunities-of-time," - definitely and absolutely means in Chinese "weather" and nothing else. There is still no good translation of even such an important work as Mencius, and I have not had the opportunity to make a new translation. In all the important passages, however, I have indicated what an improved rendering might be. To translate "establishing a government of mercy with a heart of mercy" by "As when with a commiserating mind was practised a commiserating government" is almost to kill the original text. Something of the sonorous eloquence and fine idealism in Mencius which stirred the Chinese schoolboy's soul is gone. I say this not to disparage Legge; he did an inestimable service to China by translating single-handed all the important Chinese Classics, and it was a scholarly work conscientiously and in so many respects quite

competently done. I say this to point out a more significant fact that the important work of translating Chinese classics and literature has only begun. Legge did this almost a century ago, and the Chinese scholars have not been too active in making their sacred texts known to the West. Legge's translation of the *Book of History*, undertaken twenty years after his first translation of Mencius, is much better. A complete new translation of the most important chapter of Mencius, Book VI, Part 1, is available in my *Wisdom of Confucius*, Ch. XI.

I retain the chapter and verse numbers by Legge for convenience of reference. But it should be clearly understood that the following consists of selections from *Mencius* only.

# Mencius

## The Democratic Philosopher

*Translated by James Legge*

### BOOK I, PART I

#### *Chapter I*

1 Mencius (went to) see King Huei of Liang.

2 The king said, "Venerable Sir, since you have not counted it far to come here, a distance of a thousand *li*, may I presume that you are likewise provided with (counsels) to profit my kingdom?"

3 Mencius replied, "Why must your Majesty use that word 'profit'? What I am likewise provided with are (counsels to) benevolence and righteousness,<sup>1</sup> and these are my only topics.

4 "If your Majesty say, 'What is to be done to profit my kingdom?' the great officers will say, 'What is to be done to profit our families?' and the (inferior) officers and the common people will say, 'What is to be done to profit our persons?' Superiors and inferiors will try to take the profit the one from the other, and the kingdom will be endangered. In the kingdom of ten thousand chariots, the murderer of his ruler will be (the chief of) a family of a thousand chariots. In the State of a thousand chariots, the murderer of his ruler will be (the chief of) a family of a hundred chariots. To have a thousand in ten thousand, and a hundred in a thousand, cannot be regarded as not a large allowance; but if

<sup>1</sup> "Love" and "justice" would be a better translation; the above is Legge's translation, while Giles translates them in Chuangtse as "charity" and "duty."

righteousness be put last and profit first, they will not be satisfied without snatching all.

5 "There never was a man trained to benevolence who neglected his parents. There never was a man trained to righteousness who made his ruler an after-consideration.

6 "Let your Majesty likewise make benevolence and righteousness your only themes;—why must you speak of profit?"

## Chapter II

1 When Mencius (another day) was seeing king Huei of Liang, the king (went and) stood (with him) by a pond, and, looking round on the wild geese and deer, large and small, said, "Do wise and good (princes) also take pleasure in these things?"

2 Mencius replied, "Being wise and good, they then have pleasure in these things. If they are not wise and good, though they have these things, they do not find pleasure.

3 "It is said in the Book of Poetry:—

*'When he planned the commencement of the Marvellous Tower,  
He planned it, and defined it,  
And the people in crowds undertook the work,  
And in no time completed it.  
When he planned the commencement, (he said), "Be not in a hurry;"  
But the people came as if they were his children  
The king was in the Marvellous Park,  
Where the does were lying down,—  
The does so sleek and fat;  
With the white birds glistening.  
The king was by the Marvellous Pond;—  
How full was it of fishes leaping about!'*

King Wen used the strength of the people to make his tower and pond, and the people rejoiced (to do the work), calling the tower 'the Marvellous Tower,' and the pond 'the Marvellous Pond,' and being glad that he had his deer, his fishes, and turtles. The ancients caused their people to have pleasure as well as themselves, and therefore they could enjoy it.

4 "In the Declaration of T'ang it is said, 'O sun, when wilt thou expire? We will die together with thee.' The people wished (for Chieh's death, though) they should die with him. Although he had his tower, his pond, birds and animals, how could he have pleasure alone?"

*Chapter III*

1 King Huei of Liang said, "Small as my virtue is, in (the government of) my kingdom, I do indeed exert my mind to the utmost. If the year be bad inside the Ho, I remove (as many of) the people (as) I can to the east of it, and convey grain to the country inside. If the year be bad on the east of the river, I act on the same plan. On examining the governmental methods of the neighbouring kingdoms, I do not find there is any (ruler) who exerts his mind as I do. And yet the people of the neighbouring kings do not decrease, nor do my people increase;—how is this?"

2 Mencius replied, "Your Majesty loves war; allow me to take an illustration from war. (The soldiers move forward at) the sound of the drum; and when the edges of their weapons have been crossed, (on one side) they throw away their buff-coats, trail their weapons behind them, and run. Some run a hundred paces and then stop; some run fifty paces and stop. What would you think if these, because (they had run but) fifty paces, should laugh at (those who ran) a hundred paces?" The king said, "They cannot do so. They only did not run a hundred paces; but they also ran." (Mencius) said, "Since your Majesty knows this, you have no ground to expect that your people will become more numerous than those of the neighbouring kingdoms."

3 "If the seasons of husbandry be not interfered with, the grain will be more than can be eaten. If close nets are not allowed to enter the pools and ponds, the fish and turtles will be more than can be consumed. If the axes and bills enter the hill-forests (only) at the proper times, the wood will be more than can be used. When the grain and fish and turtles are more than can be eaten, and there is more wood than can be used, this enables the people to nourish their living and do all offices for their dead, without any feeling against any. (But) this condition, in which (the people) nourish their living, and do all offices to their dead without having any feeling against any, is the first step in the Royal way."

4 "Let mulberry-trees be planted about the homesteads with their five acres, and persons of fifty years will be able to wear silk. In keeping fowls, pigs, dogs, and swine, let not their times of breeding be neglected, and persons of seventy years will be able to eat flesh.<sup>2</sup> Let there not be taken away the time that is proper for the cultivation of the field-allotment of a hundred acres, and the family of several mouths will not suffer from hunger. Let careful attention be paid to the teaching in the various schools, with repeated inculcation of the filial and fraternal duties,

<sup>2</sup> Shall read "meat."

and grey-haired men will not be seen upon the roads, carrying burdens on their backs or on their heads. It has never been that (the ruler of a State) where these results were seen, persons of seventy wearing silk and eating flesh, and the black-haired people suffering neither from hunger nor cold, did not attain to the Royal dignity.

5 "Your dogs and swine eat the food of men, and you do not know to store up (of the abundance). There are people dying from famine on the roads, and you do not know to issue (your stores for their relief). When men die, you say, 'It is not owing to me; it is owing to the year.' In what does this differ from stabbing a man and killing him, and then saying, 'It was not I; it was the weapon'? Let your Majesty cease to lay the blame on the year,<sup>3</sup> and instantly the people, all under the sky, will come to you."

#### *Chapter IV*

1 King Huei of Liang said, "I wish quietly to receive your instructions."

2 Mencius replied, "Is there any difference between killing a man with a stick and with a sword?" "There is no difference," was the answer.

3 (Mencius continued) "Is there any difference between doing it with a sword and governmental measures?" "There is not," was the answer (again).

4 (Mencius then) said, "In (your) stalls there are fat beasts; in (your) stables there are fat horses. (But) your people have the look of hunger, and in the fields there are those who have died of famine. This is leading on beasts to devour men.

5 "Beasts devour one another, and men hate them (for doing so). When he who is (called) the parent of the people conducts his government so as to be chargeable with leading on beasts to devour men, where is that parental relation to the people?

6 "Chung-ni<sup>4</sup> said, 'Was he not without posterity who first made wooden images (to bury with the dead)?' (So he said) because that man made the semblances of men and used them (for that purpose);—what shall be thought of him who causes his people to die of hunger?"

#### *Chapter V*

1 King Huei of Liang said, "There was not in the kingdom a stronger State than Ch'in, as you, venerable Sir, know. But since it descended to me, on the east we were defeated by Ch'i, and then my eldest son perished; on the west we lost seven hundred *li* of territory to Ch'in; and

<sup>3</sup> Bad harvest.

<sup>4</sup> Personal name of Confucius.

on the south we have sustained disgrace at the hands of Ch'u. I have brought shame on my departed predecessors, and wish on their account to wipe it away once for all. What course is to be pursued to accomplish this?"

2 Mencius replied, "With a territory (only) a hundred *li* square it has been possible to obtain the Royal dignity.

3 "If your Majesty will (indeed) dispense a benevolent government to the people, being sparing in the use of punishments and fines, and making the taxes and levies of produce light, (so causing that) the fields shall be ploughed deep, and the weeding well attended to, and that the able-bodied, during their days of leisure, shall cultivate their filial piety, fraternal duty, faithfulness, and truth, serving thereby, at home, their fathers and elder brothers, and, abroad, their elders and superiors; you will then have a people who can be employed with sticks which they have prepared to oppose the strong buff-coats and sharp weapons of (the troops of) Ch'in and Ch'u.

4 "(The rulers of) those (States) rob their people of their time, so that they cannot plough and weed their fields in order to support their parents. Parents suffer from cold and hunger; elder and younger brothers, wives and children, are separated and scattered abroad.

5 "Those (rulers) drive their people into pitfalls or into the water; and your Majesty will go to punish them. In such a case, who will oppose your Majesty?

6 "In accordance with this is the saying, 'The benevolent has no enemy!' I beg your Majesty not to doubt (what I said)."

## Chapter VI

1 Mencius had an interview with king Hsiang of Liang.

When he came out, he said to some persons, "When I looked at him from a distance, he did not appear like a ruler; when I drew near to him, I saw nothing venerable about him. Abruptly he asked me, 'How can the kingdom, all under the sky, be settled?'

2 "I replied, 'It will be settled by being united under one (sway).'

3 " 'Who can so unite it?' (he asked).

4 "I replied, 'He who has no pleasure in killing men can so unite it.'

5 " 'Who can give it to them?' (he asked).

6 "I replied, 'All under heaven will give it to him. Does your Majesty know the way of the growing grain? During the seventh and eighth months, when drought prevails, the plants become dry. Then the clouds collect densely in the heavens, and send down torrents of rain, so that the grain erects itself as if by a shoot. When it does so, who can keep it

back? Now among those who are shepherds of men throughout the kingdom, there is not one who does not find pleasure in killing men. If there were one who did not find pleasure in killing men, all the people under the sky would be looking towards him with outstretched necks. Such being indeed the case, the people would go to him as water flows downwards with a rush, which no one can repress."

### *Chapter VII*

1 King Hsüan of Ch'i asked, saying, "May I be informed by you of the transactions of Huan of Ch'i and Wen of Chin?"

2 Mencius replied, "There were none of the disciples of Chung-ni who spoke about the affairs of Huan and Wen, and therefore they have not been transmitted to (these) after-ages; your servant has not heard of them. If you will have me speak, let it be about (the principles of attaining to) the Royal sway."

3 (The king) said, "Of what kind must his virtue be who can (attain to) the Royal sway?" (Mencius) said, "If he loves and protects the people, it is impossible to prevent him from attaining it."

4 (The king) said, "Is such a one as poor I competent to love and protect the people?" "Yes," was the reply. "From what do you know that I am competent to that?" "I have heard," said (Mencius), "from Hu Heh the following incident:—'The king,' said he, 'was sitting aloft in the hall, when some people appeared leading a bull past below it. The king saw it, and asked where the bull was going, and being answered that they were going to consecrate a bell with its blood, he said, "Let it go, I cannot bear its frightened appearance as if it were an innocent person going to the place of death." They asked in reply whether, if they did so, they should omit the consecration of the bell; but (the king) said, "How can that be omitted? Change it for a sheep." ' I do not know whether this incident occurred."

5 "It did," said (the king), and (Mencius) replied, "The heart seen in this is sufficient to carry you to the Royal sway. The people all supposed that your Majesty grudged (the animal), but your servant knows surely that it was your Majesty's not being able to bear (the sight of the creature's distress which made you do as you did)."

6 The king said, "You are right; and yet there really was (an appearance of) what the people imagined. (But) though Ch'i be narrow and small, how should I grudge a bull? Indeed it was because I could not bear its frightened appearance, as if it were an innocent person going to the place of death, that therefore I changed it for a sheep."

7 Mencius said, "Let not your Majesty deem it strange that the people



should think you grudged the animal. When you changed a large one for a small, how should they know (the true reason)? If you felt pained by its (being led) without any guilt to the place of death, what was there to choose between a bull and a sheep?" The king laughed and said, "What really was my mind in the matter? I did not grudge the value of the bull, and yet I changed it for a sheep! There was reason in the people's saying that I grudged (the creature)."

8 (Mencius) said, "There is no harm (in their saying so). It was an artifice of benevolence. You saw the bull, and had not seen the sheep. So is the superior man affected towards animals that, having seen them alive, he cannot bear to eat their flesh. On this account he keeps away from his stalls and kitchen."

9 The king was pleased and said, "The Ode <sup>5</sup> says,

*'What other men have in their minds,  
I can measure by reflection.'*

This might be spoken of you, my Master. I indeed did the thing, but when I turned my thoughts inward and sought for it, I could not discover my own mind. When you, Master, spoke those words, the movements of compassion began to work in my mind. (But) how is it that this heart has in it what is equal to the attainment of the Royal sway?"

10 (Mencius) said, "Suppose a man were to make this statement to your Majesty, 'My strength is sufficient to lift three thousand catties, but it is not sufficient to lift one feather; my eyesight is sharp enough to examine the point of an autumn hair, but I do not see a waggon-load of faggots,' would your Majesty allow what he said?" "No," was the (king's) remark, (and Mencius proceeded), "Now here is kindness sufficient to reach to animals, and yet no benefits are extended from it to the people;—how is this? is an exception to be made here? The truth is, the feather's not being lifted is because the strength was not used; the waggon-load of firewood's not being seen is because the eyesight was not used; and the people's not being loved and protected is because the kindness is not used. Therefore your Majesty's not attaining to the Royal sway is because you do not do it, and not because you are not able to do it."

11 (The king) asked, "How may the difference between him who does not do (a thing) and him who is not able to do it be graphically set forth?" (Mencius) replied, "In such a thing as taking the T'ai mountain under your arm, and leaping with it over the North sea, if you say to people, 'I am not able to do it,' that is a real case of not being able. In

<sup>5</sup> *Book of Poetry.*

such a matter as breaking off a branch from a tree at the order of a superior, if you say to people, 'I am not able to do it,' it is not a case of not being able to do it. And so your Majesty's not attaining to the Royal sway is not such a case as that of taking the T'ai mountain under your arm and leaping over the North sea with it; but it is a case like that of breaking off a branch from a tree.

12 "Treat with the reverence due to age the elders in your own family, so that those in the families of others shall be similarly treated; treat with the kindness due to youth the young in your own family, so that those in the families of others shall be similarly treated:—do this and the kingdom may be made to go round in your palm. It is said in the Book of Poetry,

*'His example acted on his wife,  
Extended to his brethren,  
And was felt by all the clans and States;'*

telling us how (King Wen) simply took this (kindly) heart, and exercised it towards those parties. Therefore the carrying out the (feeling of) kindness (by a ruler) will suffice for the love and protection of all within the four seas; and if he do not carry it out, he will not be able to protect his wife and children. The way in which the ancients came greatly to surpass other men was no other than this, that they carried out well what they did, so as to affect others. Now your kindness is sufficient to reach to animals, and yet no benefits are extended from it to the people. How is this? Is an exception to be made here?

13 "By weighing we know what things are light, and what heavy. By measuring we know what things are long, and what short. All things are so dealt with, and the mind requires specially to be so. I beg your Majesty to measure it.

14 "Your Majesty collects your equipments of war, endangers your soldiers and officers, and excites the resentment of the various princes:—do these things cause you pleasure in your mind?"

15 The king said, "No. How should I derive pleasure from these things? My object in them is to seek for what I greatly desire."

16 (Mencius) said, "May I hear from you what it is that your Majesty greatly desires?" The king laughed, and did not speak. (Mencius) resumed, "(Are you led to desire it), because you have not enough of rich and sweet (food) for your mouth? or because you have not enough of light and warm (clothing) for your body? or because you have not enough of beautifully coloured objects to satisfy your eyes? or because you have not enough of attendants and favourites to stand before you and receive your orders? Your Majesty's various officers are sufficient to supply

you with all these things. How can your Majesty have such a desire on account of them?" "No," said the king, "my desire is not on account of them." (Mencius) observed, "Then, what your Majesty greatly desires can be known. You desire to enlarge your territories, to have Ch'in and Ch'u coming to your court, to rule the Middle States, and to attract to you the barbarous tribes that surround them. But to do what you do in order to seek for what you desire is like climbing a tree to seek for fish."

17 "Is it so bad as that?" said (the king). "I apprehend it is worse," was the reply. "If you climb a tree to seek for fish, although you do not get the fish, you have no subsequent calamity. But if you do what you do in order to seek for what you desire, doing it even with all your heart, you will assuredly afterwards meet with calamities." The king said, "May I hear (what they will be)?" (Mencius) replied, "If the people of Tsou were fighting with the people of Ch'u, which of them does your Majesty think would conquer?" "The people of Ch'u would conquer," was the answer, and (Mencius) pursued, "So then, a small State cannot contend with a great, few cannot contend with many, nor can the weak contend with the strong. The territory within the seas would embrace nine divisions, each of a thousand *li* square. All Ch'i together is one of them. If with one part you try to subdue the other eight, what is the difference between that and Tsou's contending with Ch'u? (With the desire which you have), you must turn back to the proper course (for its attainment).

18 "Now if your Majesty will institute a government whose action shall all be benevolent, this will cause all the officers in the kingdom to wish to stand in your Majesty's fields, the merchants, both travelling and stationary, all to wish to store their goods in your Majesty's market-places, travellers and visitors all to wish to travel on your Majesty's roads, and all under heaven who feel aggrieved by their rulers to wish to come and complain to your Majesty. When they are so bent, who will be able to keep them back?"

19 The king said, "I am stupid, and cannot advance to this. (But) I wish you, my Master, to assist my intentions. Teach me clearly, and although I am deficient in intelligence and vigour, I should like to try at least (to institute such a government)."

20 (Mencius) replied, "They are only men of education, who, without a certain livelihood,<sup>6</sup> are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, they will be found not to have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild licence. When they have thus been involved

<sup>6</sup> Ts'an, property: same with the following paragraphs.

in crime, to follow them up and punish them, is to entrap the people. How can such a thing as entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?

21 "Therefore an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people, so as to make sure that, above, they shall have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and below, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied, and that in bad years they shall not be in danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to what is good, for in this case the people will follow after that with readiness.

22 "But now, the livelihood of the people is so regulated, that, above, they have not sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and below, they have not sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; (even) in good years their lives are always embittered, and in bad years they are in danger of perishing. In such circumstances their only object is to escape from death, and they are afraid they will not succeed in doing so;—what leisure have they to cultivate propriety and righteousness?

23 "If your Majesty wishes to carry out (a benevolent government), why not turn back to what is the essential step (to its attainment)?

24 "Let mulberry-trees be planted about the homesteads with their five acres,<sup>6a</sup> and persons of fifty years will be able to wear silk. In keeping fowls, pigs, dogs, and swine, let not their times of breeding be neglected, and persons of seventy years will be able to eat flesh. Let there not be taken away the time that is proper for the cultivation of the field-allotment of a hundred acres, and the family of eight mouths will not suffer from hunger. Let careful attention be paid to the teaching in the various schools, with repeated inculcation of the filial and fraternal duties, and grey-haired men will not be seen upon the roads, carrying burdens on their backs or on their heads. It has never been that (the ruler of a State) where these results were seen, the old wearing silk and eating flesh, and the black-haired people suffering neither from hunger nor cold, did not attain to the Royal dignity."

## BOOK I, PART II

### Chapter I

1 Chuang Pao, (having gone to) see Mencius, said to him, "I had an audience of the king. His Majesty told me about his loving music, and I was not prepared with anything to reply to him. What do you pronounce concerning (that) love of music?" Mencius said, "If the

<sup>6a</sup> Really *mu*. The modern *mu* is one-sixth of an "acre."

king's love of music were very great, the kingdom of Ch'i would be near to (being well governed)."

2 Another day, Mencius had an audience of the king, and said, "Your Majesty, (I have heard), told the officer Chuang about your love of music;—was it so?" The king changed colour, and said, "I am unable to love the music of the ancient kings; I only love the music that suits the manners of the (present) age."

3 (Mencius) said, "If your Majesty's love of music were very great Ch'i, I apprehend, would be near to (being well governed). The music of the present day is just like the music of antiquity (for effecting that)."

4 (The king) said, "May I hear (the proof of what you say)?" "Which is the more pleasant," was the reply,—“to enjoy music by yourself alone, or to enjoy it along with others?” “To enjoy it along with others,” said (the king). “And which is the more pleasant,” pursued (Mencius),—“to enjoy music along with a few, or to enjoy it along with many?” “To enjoy it along with many,” replied (the king).

5 (Mencius went on), “Will you allow your servant to speak to your Majesty about music?”

6 “Your Majesty is having music here.—The people heard the sound of your bells and drums, and the notes of your reeds and flutes, and they all, with aching heads, knit their brows, and say to one another, ‘That’s how our king loves music! But why does he reduce us to this extremity (of distress)? Fathers and sons do not see one another; elder brothers and younger brothers, wives and children, are separated and scattered abroad.’ Again, your Majesty is hunting here. The people hear the noise of your carriages and horses, and see the beauty of your plumes and pennons, and they all, with aching heads, knit their brows, and say to one another, ‘That’s how our king loves hunting! But why does he reduce us to this extremity of distress? Fathers and sons do not see one another; elder brothers and younger brothers, wives and children, are separated and scattered abroad.’ This is from no other cause, but that you do not give the people to have pleasure as well as yourself.

7 “Your Majesty is having music here.—The people hear the sound of your bells and drums, and the notes of your reeds and flutes, and they all, delighted and with joyful looks, say to one another, ‘That sounds as if our king were free from all sickness! What fine music he is able to have!’ Again, Your Majesty is hunting here.—The people hear the noise of your carriages and horses, and see the beauty of your plumes and pennons, and they all, delighted and with joyful looks, say to one another, ‘That looks as if our king were free from all sickness! How he is able to hunt!’ This is from no other reason but that you cause the people to have pleasure as well as yourself.

8 "If your Majesty now will make pleasure a thing common to the people and yourself, the Royal sway awaits you."

## Chapter II

1 King Hsüan of Ch'i asked, "Was it so that the park of king Wen contained seventy square *li*?" Mencius replied, "It is so in the Records."

2 "Was it so large as that?" said (the king). "The people," said (Mencius), "still considered it small." "My park," responded (the king), "contains (only) forty square *li*, and the people still consider it large. How is this?" "The park of king Wen,"—said (Mencius), "contained seventy square *li*, but the grass-cutters and fuel-gatherers (had the privilege of) resorting to it, and so also had the catchers of pheasants and hares. He shared it with the people, and was it not with reason that they looked on it as small?"

3 "When I first arrived at your frontiers, I enquired about the great prohibitory regulations before I would venture to enter (the country); and I heard that inside the border-gates there was a park of forty square *li*, and that he who killed a deer in it, whether large or small, was held guilty of the same crime as if he had killed a man. In this way those forty square *li* are a pitfall (trap) in the middle of the kingdom. Is it not with reason that the people look upon (your park) as large?"

## Chapter VII

1 Mencius, having (gone to) see king Hsüan of Ch'i, said to him, "When men speak of 'an ancient kingdom,' it is not meant thereby that it has lofty trees in it, but that it has ministers (sprung from families that have been noted in it) for generations. Your Majesty has no ministers with whom you are personally intimate. Those whom you advanced yesterday are gone to-day, and you do not know it."

2 The king said, "How shall I know that they have no ability, and avoid employing them at all?"

3 The reply was, "A ruler advances to office (new) men of talents and virtue (only) as a matter of necessity. As he thereby causes the low to overstep the honourable and strangers to overstep his relatives, ought he to do so but with caution?"

4 "When all those about you say (of a man), 'He is a man of talents and virtue,' do not immediately (believe them). When your great officers all say, 'He is a man of talents and virtue,' do not immediately (believe them). When your people all say, 'He is a man of talents and virtue,' then examine into his character; and, when you find that he is such indeed, then afterwards employ him. When all those about you say,

'He will not do,' do not listen to them. When your great officers all say, 'He will not do,' do not listen to them. When your people all say, 'He will not do,' then examine into his character; and when you find that he will not do, then afterwards send him away.

5 "When those about you all say (of a man), 'He deserves death,' do not listen to them. When your great officers all say, 'He deserves death,' do not listen to them. When your people all say, 'He deserves death,' then examine into his case; and when you find that he deserves death, then afterwards put him to death. In accordance with this we have the saying, 'The people put him to death.'

6 "Act in this way and you will be the parent of the people."

### *Chapter VIII*

1 King Hsüan of Ch'i asked, saying, "Was it so that T'ang banished Chieh, and king Wu smote Chou?" Mencius replied, "It is so in the Records."

2 (The king) said, "May a subject put his ruler to death?"

3 The reply was, "He who outrages benevolence is called a ruffian,<sup>7</sup> he who outrages righteousness is called a villain. The ruffian and villain we call a mere fellow. I have heard of the cutting off of the fellow Chou;<sup>8</sup> I have not heard of the putting a ruler to death (in his case)."

### *Chapter X*

1 The people of Ch'i attacked Yen, and conquered it.

2 King Hsüan asked, saying, "Some tell me not to take possession of it, and some tell me to take possession of it. For a kingdom of ten thousand chariots to attack another of the same strength, and to complete the conquest of it in fifty days, is an achievement beyond (mere) human strength. If I do not take it, calamities from Heaven will surely come upon me:—what do you say to my taking possession of it?"

3 Mencius replied, "If the people of Yen will be pleased with your taking possession of it, do so.—Among the ancients there was (one) who acted in this way, namely, king Woo. If the people of Yen will not be pleased with your taking possession of it, do not. Among the ancients there was one who acted in this way, namely, king We.

4 "When with (the strength of) your kingdom of ten thousand chariots you attacked another of the same strength and they met your Majesty's army with baskets of rice and vessels of congee, was there any

<sup>7</sup> *Tsei* should read "thief."

<sup>8</sup> The last tyrant emperor of Shang.

other reason for this but that they (hoped to) escape out of fire and water? <sup>9</sup>

If (you make) the water more deep and the fire more fierce, they will just in like manner make another revolution."

## Chapter XI

1 The people of Ch'i having attacked Yen and taken possession of it, the (other) princes proposed to take measures to deliver Yen. King Hsüan said, "As the princes are many of them consulting to attack me, how shall I prepare myself for them?" Mencius replied, "I have heard of one who with seventy *li* gave law to the whole kingdom, but I have not heard of (a ruler) who with a thousand *li* was afraid of others.

2 "The Book of History says, 'When T'ang began his work of punishment, he commenced with Ko. All under heaven had confidence in him. When the work went on in the east, the wild tribes of the west murmured. When it went on in the south, those of the north murmured. They said, "Why does he make us the last?" The looking of the people for him was like the looking in a time of great drought for clouds and rainbows. The frequenters of the markets stopped not; the husbandmen made no change (in their operations). While he took off their rulers, he consoled the people. (His progress) was like the falling of seasonable rain, and the people were delighted.' It is said (again) in the Book of History, 'We have waited for our prince (long); the prince's coming is our reviving.'

3 "Now (the ruler of) Yen was tyrannizing over his people, and your Majesty went and punished them. The people supposed that you were going to deliver them out of the water and the fire, and with baskets of rice and vessels of congee they met your Majesty's host. But you have slain their fathers and elder brothers, and put their sons and younger brothers in chains; you have pulled down the ancestral temple (of the rulers), and are carrying away its precious vessels:—how can such a course be admitted? (The other States of) the kingdom were afraid of the strength of Ch'i before; and now when with a doubled territory you do not exercise a benevolent government, this puts the arms of the kingdom in motion (against you).

4 "If your Majesty will make haste to issue an order, restoring (your captives) old and young, and stopping (the removal of) the precious vessels; (and if then) you will consult with the people of Yen, appoint (for them) a (new) ruler, and afterwards withdraw from the country:—in this way you may still be able to stop (the threatened attack)."

<sup>9</sup> "In deep water" or distress.



*Chapter XII*

1 There had been a skirmish between (some troops of) Tsou and Lu, (in reference to which,) duke Mu asked, saying, "Of my officers there were killed thirty-three men and none of the people would die in their defence. If I would put them to death, it is impossible to deal so with so many; if I do not put them to death, then there is (the crime unpunished of) their looking on with evil eyes at the death of their officers, and not saving them:—how is the exigency of the case to be met?"

2 Mencius replied, "In calamitous years and years of famine the old and weak of your people who have been found lying in ditches and water-channels, and the able-bodied who have been scattered about to the four quarters, have mounted to thousands. All the while, your granaries, O prince, have been stored with rice and other grain, and your treasuries and arsenals have been full, and not one of your officers has told you (of the distress);—so negligent have the superiors (in your State) been, and cruel to their inferiors. The philosopher Tseng said, 'Beware, beware. What proceeds from you will return to you?' Now at last the people have had an opportunity to return (their conduct); do not you, O prince, blame them.

3 "If you will practise a benevolent government, then the people will love all above them, and will die for their officers."

## BOOK II, PART I

*Chapter VI*

1 Mencius said, "All men have a mind which cannot bear (to see the sufferings of) others.<sup>10</sup>

2 "The ancient kings had this commiserating mind,<sup>10</sup> and they had likewise, as a matter of course, a commiserating government.<sup>11</sup> When with a commiserating mind there was practised a commiserating government, to bring all under heaven to order was (as easy) as to make (a small thing) go round in the palm.

3 "The ground on which I say that all men have a mind which cannot bear (to see suffering of) others is this:—Even nowadays, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will all experience a feeling of alarm and distress. They will feel so not that they may thereon gain the favour of the child's parents; nor that they may seek

<sup>10</sup> Or simpler: "have a heart of mercy." Same with following sentences.

<sup>11</sup> Simpler: "a rule of mercy."

the praise of their neighbours and friends; nor from a dislike to the reputation of (being unmoved by) such a thing.<sup>12</sup>

4 "Looking at the matter from this case, (we may see that) to be without this feeling of distress is not human, and that it is not human to be without the feeling of shame and dislike, or to be without the feeling of modesty and complaisance, or to be without the feeling of approving and disapproving.<sup>13</sup>

5 "That feeling of distress is the principle of benevolence; the feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness; the feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety; and the feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge.

6 "Men have these four principles just as they have their four limbs. When men, having these four principles, yet say of themselves that they cannot (manifest them), they play the thief with <sup>14</sup> themselves; and he who says of his ruler that he cannot (manifest them), plays the thief with his ruler.

7 "Since we all have the four principles in ourselves, let us know to give them all their development and completion, and the issue will be like that of a fire which has begun to burn, or of a spring which has begun to find vent. Let them have their full development, and they will suffice to love and protect all (within) the four seas; let them be denied that development, and they will not suffice for a man to serve his parents with."

## BOOK II, PART II

### *Chapter I*

1 Mencius said, "Opportunities of time (vouchsafed by) Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation (afforded by) the earth, and advantages of situation (afforded by) the earth are not equal to the strength (arising from the) accord of men.<sup>15</sup>

2 "(There is a city), with an inner wall of three *li* in circumference and an outer wall of seven. (The enemy) surround and attack it, but are not able to take it. Now, to surround and attack it, there must have been vouchsafed to them by Heaven the opportunity of time, and in such case

<sup>12</sup> Based on Mencian idea that human nature is innately good.

<sup>13</sup> Should read: "He who has not a heart of mercy is not a man; who has not a sense of shame is not a man; who has not a sense of courtesy and consideration for others is not a man; who is without a sense of right and wrong is not a man." Similar substitutions should be made for the following paragraph.

<sup>14</sup> Really "injure."

<sup>15</sup> Mencius is briefer: Weather is less important than terrain; terrain is less important than people's unity (morale). Same substitutions in the following two paragraphs will make them immediately clearer.

their not taking it is because opportunities of time (vouchsafed by) Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation (afforded by) the earth.

3 “(There is a city) whose walls are as high and moats as deep as could be desired, and where the arms and mail (of its defenders) are distinguished for their sharpness and strength, and the (stores of) rice and grain are abundant; yet it has to be given up and abandoned. This is because advantages of situation (afforded by) the earth are not equal to the (strength arising from the) accord of men.

4 “In accordance with these principles it is said, ‘A people is bounded in not by the limits of dykes and borders; a State is secured not by the strengths of mountains and streams; the kingdom is overawed not by the sharpness of arms (and strength) of mail.’ He who finds the proper course <sup>16</sup> has many to assist him, and he who loses it has few. When this—the being assisted by few—reaches the extreme point, (a ruler’s) own relatives and connexions revolt from him. When the being assisted by many reaches its extreme point, all under heaven become obedient (to the ruler).

5 “When one to whom all under heaven are prepared to become obedient attacks one from whom his own relatives and connexions are ready to revolt, (what must the result be?) Therefore the true ruler will (prefer) not (to) fight, but if he do fight, he is sure to overcome.”

## BOOK III, PART I

### *Chapter III*

13 (The Duke Wen of T’eng) sent Pi Chan to ask about the nine-squares system <sup>17</sup> of dividing the land. Mencius said to him, “Since your ruler, wishing to put in practice a benevolent government, has made choice of you, and put you into this employment, you must use all your efforts. Benevolent government must commence with the definition of the boundaries. If the boundaries be not defined correctly, the division of the land into squares will not be equal, and the produce (available for) salaries will not be evenly distributed. On this account, oppressive rulers and impure ministers are sure to neglect the defining of the boundaries. When the boundaries have been defined correctly, the division of the fields and the regulation of the salaries may be determined (by you) sitting (at your ease).

14 “Although the territory of T’eng be narrow and small, there must

<sup>16</sup> *Tao*, the true teaching.

<sup>17</sup> The ancient communal farm system, dividing a lot into nine equal squares, the middle one being the government farm.

be in it, I apprehend, men of a superior grade, and there must be in it countrymen. If there were not men of a superior grade, there would be none to rule the countrymen; if there were not countrymen, there would be none to support the men of superior grade.

15 "I would ask you, in the (purely) country districts, to observe the nine-square division, having one square cultivated on the system of mutual aid; and in the central parts of the State, to levy a tenth, to be paid by the cultivators themselves.<sup>18</sup>

16 "From the highest officers downwards, each one must have (his) holy field,<sup>19</sup> consisting of fifty acres.

17 "Let the supernumerary males have (their) twenty-five acres.

18 "On occasions of death, or of removing from one dwelling to another, there will be no quitting the district. In the fields of a district, those who belong to the same nine-squares render all friendly offices to one another in their going out and coming in, aid one another in keeping watch and ward, and sustain one another in sickness. Thus the people will be led to live in affection and harmony.

19 "A square *li* covers nine squares of land, which nine squares contain nine hundred acres. The central square contains the public fields; and eight families, each having its own hundred acres,<sup>20</sup> cultivate them together. And it is not till the public work is finished that they presume to attend to their private fields. (This is) the way by which the country-men are distinguished (from those of a superior grade).

20 "These are the great outlines (of the system). Happily to modify and adapt them depends on your ruler and you."

## BOOK III, PART II

### Chapter VIII

1 Tai Ying-chih said (to Mencius), "I am not able at present and immediately to do with a tithe (only), and abolish (at the same time) the duties charged at the passes and in the markets. With your leave I will lighten all (the present extraordinary exactions) until next year, and then make an end of them. What do you think of such a course?"

2 Mencius said, "He is a man who every day appropriates the fowls of his neighbours that stray to his premises. Someone says to him, 'Such is not the way of a good man,' and he replies, 'With your leave I will

<sup>18</sup> Should read: "In the confines of the city (where land cannot be divided into nine-squares) to levy a tithe calculated by the tax-payers."

<sup>19</sup> For keeping up sacrifices.

<sup>20</sup> Really *mu*, one-sixth of an acre.

diminish my appropriations, and will take only one fowl a month, until next year, when I will make an end of the practice altogether.'

3 "If you know that the thing is unrighteous, then put an end to it with all despatch;—why wait till next year?"

### Chapter X

1 K'uang Chang said (to Mencius), "Is not Mr. Ch'en Chung a man of true self-denying purity? He was living in Wu-ling, and for three days was without food, till he could neither hear nor see. Over a well there grew a plum tree, a fruit of which had been, more than half of it, eaten by worms. He crawled to it, and tried to eat (some of this fruit), when, after swallowing three mouthfuls, he recovered his sight and hearing."

2 Mencius replied "Among the scholars of Ch'i I must regard Chung as the thumb (among the fingers). But still, how can he be regarded as having that self-denying purity? To carry out the principles which he holds, one must become an earth-worm, for so only can it be done.

3 "Now an earth-worm eats the dry mould above, and drinks the yellow spring below. Was the house in which Mr. Chung lives built by a Poyi? or was it built by a robber like Cheh? Was the grain which he eats planted by a Poyi? or was it planted by a robber like Cheh? These are things which cannot be known."

4 "But," said (Chang), "what does that matter? He himself weaves sandals of hemp, and his wife twists hempen threads, which they exchange (for other things)."

5 (Mencius) rejoined, "Mr. Chung belongs to an ancient and noble family of Ch'i. His elder brother Tai received from Kai a revenue of 10,000 *chung*, but he considered his brother's emolument to be unrighteous, and would not dwell in the place. Avoiding his brother, and leaving his mother, he went and dwelt in Wu-ling. One day afterwards, he returned (to their house), when it happened that someone sent his brother a present of a live goose. He, knitting his brows, said, 'What are you going to use that cackling thing for?' By and by, his mother killed the goose, and gave him some of it to eat. (Just then) his brother came into the house and said, 'It's the flesh of that cackling thing,' on which he went out, and vomited it.

6 "Thus what his mother gave him he would not eat, but what his wife gives him he eats. He will not dwell in his brother's house, but he dwells in Wu-ling. How can he in such circumstances complete the style of life which he professes? With such principles as Mr. Chung holds, (a man must be) an earth-worm, and then he can carry them out."

## BOOK IV, PART I

*Chapter VII*

1 Mencius said, "When right government prevails through the kingdom, (princes of) little virtue are submissive to those of great, and (those of) little worth to (those of) great. When bad government prevails, the small are submissive to the large, and the weak to the strong.<sup>21</sup> Both these cases are (the law of) Heaven. They who accord with Heaven are preserved; they who rebel against Heaven perish.

*Chapter VIII*

4 "A man must (first) despise himself, and then others will despise him. A family must (first) overthrow itself, and then others will overthrow it. A State must (first) smite itself, and then others will smite it.

5 "This is illustrated by the passage in the T'ai-chai, 'Calamities sent by Heaven may be avoided; but when we bring on the calamities ourselves, it is not possible to live.' "

*Chapter IX*

1 Mencius said, "Chieh and Chou's<sup>22</sup> losing the kingdom arose from their losing the people; and to lose the people means to lose their hearts. There is a way to get<sup>23</sup> the kingdom;—get the people, and the kingdom is got. There is a way to get the people;—get their hearts, and the people are got. There is a way to get their hearts;—it is simply to collect for them what they desire, and not to lay on them what they dislike.

2 "The people turn to a benevolent (rule) as water flows downwards, and as wild beasts run to the wilds.

3 "Accordingly (as) the otter aids the deep waters, driving the fish to them, and (as) the hawk aids the thickets, driving the little birds to them, (so) did Chieh and Chou aid T'ang and Wu, driving the people to them.

4 "If among the present rulers throughout the kingdom there were one who loved benevolence, all the (other) princes would aid him by driving the people to him. Although he wished not to exercise the royal sway, he could not avoid doing so.

<sup>21</sup> More exactly and clearly: "When the right teachings prevail, the moral inferior serve the moral superior, and the mental inferior serve the mental superior. When the right teachings do not prevail, the small serve the big and the weak serve the strong."

<sup>22</sup> The tyrant Chou, not the Chou Dynasty.

<sup>23</sup> Substitute "win" throughout, and it will immediately read better.

*Chapter XIV*

1 Mencius said, "Ch'iu acted as chief officer to the Head of the Chi family, whose (evil) ways he was unable to change, while he exacted from the people double the grain which they had formerly paid. Confucius said, 'He is no disciple of mine. Little children, beat the drum and assail him.'

2 "Looking at the subject from this case, (we perceive that) when a ruler who was not practising benevolent government, all (his ministers) who enriched him were disowned by Confucius;—how much more (would he have disowned) those who are vehement to fight (for their ruler)! Some contention about territory is the ground on which they fight, and they slaughter men till the fields are filled with them; or they fight for the possession of some fortified city, and slaughter men till the walls are covered with them. This is what is called 'leading land on to devour human flesh.' <sup>24</sup> Death is not enough for such a crime.

3 "Therefore those who are skilful to fight should suffer the highest punishment.<sup>25</sup> Next to them (should be punished) those who unite the princes in leagues; and next to them, those who take in grassy wastes, and impose the cultivation of the ground (upon the people)."

## BOOK IV, PART II

*Chapter III*

1 Mencius addressed himself to king Hsüan of Ch'i saying, "When a ruler regards his ministers as his hands and feet, they regard him as their belly and heart; when he regards them as his dogs and horses, they regard him as they do any ordinary man;<sup>26</sup> when he regards them as the ground <sup>27</sup> or as grass, they regard him as a robber and an enemy."

*Chapter VIII*

Mencius said, "When men have what they will not do, they are prepared to act in what they do do (with effect)."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Mencius is briefer; literally—"In a war for territory, the dead fill the countryside; in a war for cities, the dead fill the cities. This is to allow territories to devour human flesh."

<sup>25</sup> More simply: "The best fighters should receive the supreme punishment."

<sup>26</sup> "A common citizen."

<sup>27</sup> "Dirt."

<sup>28</sup> "Men must refuse to do certain things before they can do (great) things."

## CHAPTER XII

Mencius said, "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart." <sup>29</sup>

## Chapter XXXIII

I "A man of Ch'i had a wife and a concubine, and lived together with them in his house. When their good-man went out, he was sure to get himself well filled with spirits and flesh and then return, and on his wife's asking him with whom he had been eating and drinking, they were sure to be all men of wealth and rank. The wife informed the concubine, saying, 'When the good-man goes out, he is sure to come back having partaken plentifully of spirits and flesh, and when I ask him with whom he has been eating and drinking, they are all men of wealth and rank. And yet no men of distinction ever come (here). I will spy out where our good-man goes.' (Accordingly) she got up early in the morning, and privately followed the good-man to where he was going. All through the city there was nobody who stood and talked with him. At last he came to those who were sacrificing among the tombs outside the outer wall on the east, and begged what they had left. Not being satisfied, he looked round him and went to another party;—and this was the way in which he got himself satiated. His wife went home, and informed the concubine, saying, 'It was to the good-man that we looked up in hopeful contemplation, and with whom our lot is cast for life; <sup>30</sup>—and these are his ways.' (On this) she and the concubine reviled their good-man, and wept together in the middle courtyard. (In the meantime) the good-man, knowing nothing of all this, came in with a jaunty air, carrying himself proudly to them.

2 "According to the view which a superior man takes of things, as to the ways by which men seek for riches, honours, gain, and advancement, there are few of their wives and concubines who might not be ashamed and weep together because of them."

## BOOK V, PART I

## Chapter V

I Wan Chang said, "(It is said that) Yao gave the empire to Shun; was it so?" Mencius replied, "No; the emperor cannot give the empire to another."

<sup>29</sup> "The child's heart" (of innocence).

<sup>30</sup> "A husband is one whom one looks to for support for life."



2 "Yes; but Shun possessed the empire. Who gave it to him?" "Heaven gave it to him," was the reply.

3 "'Heaven gave it to him'; did (Heaven) confer the appointment on him with specific injunctions?"

4 (Mencius) said, "No; Heaven does not speak. It simply showed its will by his (personal) conduct, and by (his conduct of) affairs."

5 "'It showed its will by his (personal conduct of) affairs,'" returned the other;—"how was this?" (Mencius) said, "The emperor can present a man to Heaven, but he cannot make Heaven give that man the empire. A feudal prince can present a man to the emperor (to take his place), but he cannot make the emperor give the principedom to that man. A great officer can present a man to his prince, but he cannot cause the prince to make that man a great officer (in his own room). Anciently, Yao presented Shun to Heaven, and Heaven accepted him; he displayed him to the people, and the people accepted him. Therefore I say, 'Heaven does not speak. It simply indicated its will by his (personal) conduct, and by (his conduct of) affairs.'"

6 (Chang) said, "I presume to ask how it was that (Yao) presented Shun to Heaven, and Heaven accepted him, and displayed him to the people, and the people accepted him." The reply was, "He caused him to preside over the sacrifices, and all the Spirits were well pleased with them; thus it was that Heaven accepted him. He caused him to preside over the conduct of affairs, and affairs were well administered, so that all the people reposed under him;—thus it was that the people accepted him. Heaven gave (the empire) to him, and the people gave it to him. Therefore I said, 'The emperor cannot give the empire to another.'"

7 "Shun assisted Yao (in the government) for twenty and eight years;—this was more than man could have done, and was from Heaven. When the three years' mourning consequent on the death of Yao were accomplished, Shun withdrew from the son of Yao to the south of the southern Ho. The princes of the empire, however, repairing to court, went not to the son of Yao, but to Shun. Litigants went not to the son of Yao, but to Shun. Singers sang not about the son of Yao, but about Shun. Therefore I said that it was Heaven (that gave him the empire). It was after this that he went to the Middle State, and occupied the seat of the son of Heaven. If he had (before these things) taken up his residence in the palace of Yao, and applied pressure to his son, it would have been an act of usurpation, and not the gift of Heaven.

8 "This view (of Shun's obtaining the empire) is in accordance with what is said in The Great Declaration,—'Heaven sees as my people see, Heaven hears as my people hear.'"

BOOK VI, PART I <sup>31</sup>*Chapter I*

1 Kaotse said, "(Man's) nature is like a willow tree, and righteousness is like a cup or a bowl.<sup>32</sup> The fashioning of benevolence and righteousness out of man's nature is like making cups and bowls from the willow tree."

2 Mencius replied, "Can you, in accordance with the nature of the willow tree, make cups and bowls from it? You will do violence and injury to the tree before you can make cups and bowls from it. If you will do violence and injury to the willow tree in order to make cups and bowls, will you also do violence and injury to a man, to fashion benevolence and righteousness (from him)? Your words, alas! would certainly with all men occasion calamity to benevolence and righteousness."<sup>33</sup>

*Chapter II*

1 Kaotse said, "(Man's) nature is like water whirling round (in a corner). Open a passage for it on the east, and it will flow to the east; open a passage for it on the west, and it will flow to the west. Man's nature is indifferent to good and evil, just as water is indifferent to the east and west."

2 Mencius replied, "Water indeed will flow indifferently to the east or west, but will it flow indifferently up or down? The (tendency of) man's nature to goodness is like the (tendency of) water to flow downwards. There are none but have (this tendency to) goodness, (just as) water flows downwards.

3 "Now by striking water, and causing it to leap up, you may make it go over your forehead; and by damming and leading it, you may make it go up a hill; but are (such movements according to) the nature of water? It is the force applied which causes them. In the case of a man's being made to do what is not good, his nature is dealt with in this way."

*Chapter III*

1 Kaotse said, "(The phenomena of) life is what I call nature."

<sup>31</sup> If the reader wishes to read a clearer translation of this most important portion of Mencius he should consult the new translation in "*Wisdom of Confucius*" (Modern Library), Chapter XI.

<sup>32</sup> Wicker basket.

<sup>33</sup> "Destroy the teachings of love and justice" by assuming that they are not in accord with our nature, but are external teachings forcing our nature into shape. Mencius believes goodness is in man's innate nature.

2 Mencius replied, "Do you say that life is nature just as you say that white is white?" "Yes," was the reply. (Mencius asked again), "Is the whiteness of a white feather like the whiteness of white snow, and the whiteness of white snow like that of white jade?" "Yes," returned (the other).

3 Mencius retorted, "Very well. Is the nature of a dog like the nature of an ox, and the nature of an ox like the nature of a man?" <sup>34</sup>

#### *Chapter IV*

1 Kaotse said, "(To delight in) food and in sexual pleasure is nature. Benevolence is from within, and not from without; righteousness is from without and not from within." <sup>35</sup>

2 Mencius said, "What is the ground of your saying that benevolence is from within, and righteousness from without?" (The other) replied, "There is a man older than I, and I give honour to his age;—it is not that there is in me a principle of reverence for age. It is just as when there is a white man, and I consider him white;—according as he is so externally to me. It is on this account that I say (of righteousness) that it is from without."

3 (Mencius) said, "There is no difference to us between the whiteness of a white horse and the whiteness of a white man, but I do not know that there is no difference between the regard with which we acknowledge the age of an old horse, and that with which we acknowledge the age of a man older (than ourselves)? And what is it which we call righteousness? The fact of a man's being older (than we)? or the fact of our giving honour to his age?" <sup>36</sup>

4 (Kao) said, "There is my younger brother; I love him. But the younger brother of a man of Ch'in I do not love; that is, it is (the relationship to) myself which occasions any complacency, <sup>37</sup> and therefore I say that benevolence is from within. I give the honour due to age to an old man of Ch'u, and to an old man of my own (kindred); that is, it is the age which occasions the complacency, and therefore I say that righteousness is from without."

5 (Mencius) answered him, "Our enjoyment of meat broiled by a man of Ch'in does not differ from our enjoyment of meat broiled by (one of) our (own kindred). Thus (what you insist on) takes place also in the case of (such) things; but is our enjoyment of broiled meat also from without?"

<sup>34</sup> Mencius was careful to insist that the human in us is different from the beastly.

<sup>35</sup> Justice, or duties to one's fellow men, are created by social life, while love is innate. Mencius insists, however, that both are innate, including the love to do what is right (justice).

<sup>36</sup> Respect for age is subjective (and innate).

<sup>37</sup> "I love (naturally) my own kind."

*Chapter V*

1 Mr. Meng Chi asked the disciple Kung-tu, saying, "On what ground is it said that righteousness is from within?"

2 (Kung-tu) replied, "It is the acting out of our feeling of respect, and therefore it is said to be from within."

3 (The other) said, "(In the case of) a villager one year older than your elder brother, to which of them will you show the (greater) respect?" "To my brother," was the reply. "But for which would you pour out spirits first?" (Kung-tu) said, "For the villager." (Meng Chi then argued), "Your feeling of respect rests on the one, but your reverence for age is rendered to the other; (righteousness) is certainly determined by what is without, and not by internal feeling."

4 The disciple Kung-tu was unable to reply, and reported (the conversation) to Mencius, who said, "(You should ask him), 'Which do you respect more, your uncle, or your younger brother?' He will reply, 'My uncle.' (Ask him again), 'If your younger brother be personating a deceased ancestor, to whom will you show respect more,—(to him or to your uncle)?' He will say, 'To my younger brother.' (You can go on), 'But where is the (greater) respect due, as you said, to your uncle?' He will say, '(I show it to my younger brother), because he is in the position (of the deceased ancestor).' And then you must say, 'Because he is in that position;—and so ordinarily my respect is given to my elder brother, but a momentary respect is given to the villager.'"

5 When Meng Chi heard this, he observed, "When respect is due to my uncle, I give it to him; and when respect is due to my younger brother, I give it to him. The thing is certainly determined by what is without us, and does not come from within." Kung-tu replied, "In winter we drink things warm, but in summer we drink things cold; but is then our eating and drinking determined by what is external to us?"

*Chapter VI*

1 The disciple Kung-tu said, "Kaotse says, '(Man's) nature is neither good nor bad.'

2 "Some say, '(Man's) nature may be made to do good, and it may be made to do evil; and accordingly, under Wen and Wu, the people loved what was good, and under Yu and Li they loved what was cruel.'

3 "Some say, 'The nature of some is good, and the nature of others is bad. Hence it was that under such a ruler as Yao, there appeared Hsiang; that with such a father as Kusau, there yet appeared Shun; and that, with Chou for their ruler and the son of their elder brother besides, there yet appeared Ch'i, the viscount of Wei, and prince Pikan.'

4 "And now you say, 'The nature is good.' Then are all those wrong?"

5 Mencius replied, "From the feelings proper to it, (we see) that it is constituted for the doing of what is good.<sup>38</sup> This is what I mean in saying that (the nature) is good.

6 "If (men) do what is not good, the guilt cannot be imputed to their natural powers.

7 "The feeling of compassionate distress belongs to all men; so does that of shame and dislike; and that of modesty and respect; and that of approving and disapproving.<sup>39</sup> The feeling of compassion and distress is the principle of benevolence; the feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness; the feeling of modesty and respect is the principle of propriety; and the feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge are not fused into us from without; they naturally belong to us, and (a different view) is simply from want of reflection. Hence it is said, 'Seek, and you will find them; neglect, and you will lose them.' (Men differ from one another in regard to them); some as much again as others, some five times as much, and some to an incalculable amount; it is because they cannot fully carry out their (natural) endowments.

8 "It is said in the Book of Poetry,

'Heaven in giving birth to the multitude of the people,  
To every faculty and relationship annexed its law:  
The people possess this normal nature,  
And they (consequently) love its normal virtue.'

Confucius said, 'The maker of this ode knew indeed the constitution (of our nature).' We may thus see that to every faculty and relationship there must belong its law, and that since the people possess this normal nature, they therefore love its normal virtue."

## *Chapter VII*

1 Mencius said, "In good years the children of the people are most of them good, and in bad years they are most of them evil. It is not owing to their natural endowments conferred by Heaven, that they are thus different. It is owing to the circumstances in which they allow their minds to be ensnared and devoured that they appear so (as in the latter case).

2 "There now is barley.—Let the seed be sown and covered up; the ground being the same, and the time of sowing also the same, it grows

<sup>38</sup> "If allowed to follow their nature, they will do good."

<sup>39</sup> Read: "The heart of mercy is in all men; the sense of shame is in all men; the sense of courtesy and respect is in all men; the sense of right and wrong is in all men."

luxuriantly, and when the full time is come, it is all found to be ripe. Although there may be inequalities (of produce), that is owing to (the difference of) the soil as rich or poor, to the (unequal) nourishment afforded by rain and dew, and to the different ways in which man has performed his business.

3 "Thus all things which are the same in kind are like to one another;—why should we doubt in regard to man, as if he were a solitary exception to this? The sage and we are the same in kind.<sup>40</sup>

4 "In accordance with this, Lungtse said, "If a man make hempen sandals, without knowing (the size of people's) feet, yet I know that he will not make them like baskets.' Sandals are like one another, because all men's feet are like one another.

5 "So with the mouth and flavours;—all mouths have the same relishes. Yiya (simply) appreciated before me what my mouth relishes. Suppose that his mouth, in its relish for flavours, were of a different nature from (the mouths of) other men, in the same way as dogs and horses are not of the same kind with us, how should all men be found following Yiya in their relishes? In the matter of tastes, the whole kingdom models itself after Yiya; that is, the mouths of all men are like one another.

6 "So it is with the ear also. In the matter of sounds, the whole kingdom models itself after the music-master K'uang; that is, the ears of all men are like one another.

7 "And so it is also with the eye. In the case of Tsetu, there is no one under heaven but would recognize that he was beautiful. Anyone who did not recognize the beauty of Tsetu would (be said to) have no eyes.

8 "Therefore (I) say,—(Men's) mouths agree in having the same relishes; their ears agree in enjoying the same sounds; their eyes agree in recognizing the same beauty;—shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve? What is it then of which their minds similarly approve? It is the principles (of things), and the (consequent determinations of) righteousness. The sages only apprehended before me that which I and other men agree in approving.<sup>41</sup> Therefore the principles (of things) and (the determinations of) righteousness are agreeable to my mind just as (the flesh) of grass and grain-fed (animals) is agreeable to my mouth."

### *Chapter VIII*

1 Mencius said, "The trees of Niu hill were once beautiful. Being situated, however, in the suburbs of (the capital of) a large State, they

<sup>40</sup> Or, "are of the same species."

<sup>41</sup> More exactly: "The sages are those who discover what is common to our hearts."

were hewn down with axes and bills; and could they retain their beauty? Still through the growth from the vegetative life day and night, and the nourishing influence of the rain and dew, they were not without buds and sprouts springing out. But then came the cattle and goats, and browsed upon them. To these things is owing the bare and stript appearance (of the hill); and when people see this, they think it was never finely wooded. But is this the nature of the hill?

2 "And so even of what properly belongs to man; shall it be said that the mind (of any man) was without benevolence and righteousness? <sup>42</sup> The way in which a man loses the proper goodness of his mind is like the way in which (those) trees were denuded by axes and bills. Hewn down day after day, can it retain its excellence? But there is some growth of its life day and night, and in the (calm) air of the morning, just between night and day, the mind feels in a degree those desires and aversions which are proper to humanity; but the feeling is not strong; and then it is fettered and destroyed by what the man does during the day. This fettering takes place again and again; the restorative influence of the night is not sufficient to preserve (the proper goodness); and when this proves insufficient for that purpose, the (nature) becomes not much different from (that of) the irrational animals; and when people see this, they think that it never had those endowments (which I assert). But does this condition represent the feelings proper to humanity?

3 "Therefore if it receive its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not grow; if it lose its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not decay away.

4 "Confucius said, 'Hold it fast, and it remains with you; let it go, and you lose it. Its out-going and in-coming cannot be defined as to time and place.' It was the mental nature of which this was said."

### *Chapter IX*

1 Mencius said, "It is not to be wondered at that the king is not wise!

2 "Suppose the case of the most easily growing thing in the world;—if you let it have one day's genial heat, and then expose it for ten days to cold, it will not be able to grow. It is but seldom that I have an audience (of the king), and when I retire, there come (all) those who act upon him like the cold. Though I succeed in bringing out some buds of goodness, of what avail is it?

3 "Now chess-playing is an art, though a small one; but without his whole mind being given, and his will bent to it, a man cannot succeed in it. Chess Ch'iu is the best chess-player in all the kingdom. Suppose

<sup>42</sup> Better: "love and justice."

that he is teaching two men to play;—the one gives all his mind to the game, and bends to it all his will, doing nothing but listen to Chess Ch'iu; the other, though he (seems to) be listening to him, has his whole mind running on a swan which he thinks is approaching, and wishes to bend his bow, adjust the arrow to the string, and shoot it. Though the latter is learning along with the former, his progress is not equal to his. Is it because his intelligence is not equal? Not so."

### Chapter X

1 Mencius said, "I like fish, and I also like bears' paws. If I cannot get both together, I will let the fish go and take the bears' paws. So I like life, and I also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go and choose righteousness.

2 "I like life indeed, but there is that which I like more than life; and therefore I will not seek to hold it by any improper ways. I dislike death indeed, but there is that which I dislike more than death, and therefore there are occasions when I will not avoid calamity (that may occasion death).

3 "If among the things which man likes there were nothing which he liked more than life, why should he not use all means by which he could preserve it? If among the things which man dislikes there were nothing which he disliked more than death, why should he not do everything by which he could avoid calamity (that might occasion it).

4 "(But as man is), there are cases when by a certain course men might preserve life, and yet they do not employ it; and when by certain things they might avoid calamity (that will occasion death), and yet they will not do them.

5 "Therefore men have that which they like more than life, and that which they dislike more than death. They are not men of talents and virtue only who have this mental nature. All men have it;—what belongs to such men is simply that they are able not to lose it.

6 "Here are a small basket of rice and a basin of soup;—and the case is one where the getting them will preserve life, and the want of them will be death. If they are offered to him in an insulting tone,<sup>43</sup> (even) a tramper on the road will not receive them, or if you first tread upon them, (even) a beggar will not stoop to take them.

7 "(And yet) a man will accept of ten thousand *chung*,<sup>44</sup> without any question as to the propriety and righteousness of his doing so. What can the ten thousand *chung* really add to him? (When he takes them), is it not that he may get beautiful mansions? or that he may secure the

<sup>43</sup> Lit. "with a 'Tut!' "

<sup>44</sup> As official salary.



services of wives and concubines? or that the poor and needy of his acquaintance may be helped by him?

8 "In the former case, the (offered bounty) was not received, though it would have saved from death, and now the man takes (the emolument) for the sake of beautiful mansions. (The bounty) that would have saved from death was not received, and (the emolument) is taken to get the services of wives and concubines. (The bounty) that would have saved from death was not received, and (the emolument) is taken that one's poor and needy acquaintances may be helped by him. Was it not possible then to decline (the emolument) in these instances? This is a case of what is called—losing the proper nature of one's mind."

### *Chapter XI*

1 Mencius said, "Benevolence is (the proper quality of) man's mind, and righteousness is man's (proper) path.

2 "How lamentable is it to neglect this path and not pursue it, to lose this mind <sup>45</sup> and not know to seek it (again).

3 "When men's fowls and dogs are lost, they know to seek them (again); but they lose their mind, and do not know to seek it (again).

4 "The object of learning is nothing else but to seek for the lost mind." <sup>46</sup>

### *Chapter XII*

1 Mencius said, "Here is a man whose fourth finger is bent, and cannot be stretched out straight. It is not painful, nor does it incommode his business; but if there were anyone who could make it straight, he would not think it far to go all the way from Ch'iu to Ch'i (to find him); —because his finger is not like those of other people.

2 "When a man's finger is not like other people's, he knows to feel dissatisfied, but when his mind is not like other people's, he does not know to feel dissatisfied. That is what is called—ignorance of the relative (importance of things)."

### *Chapter XIII*

Mencius said, "Anybody who wishes to cultivate a *t'ung* tree, or a *tse*, which may be grasped with the two hands, (perhaps) with one, knows by what means to nourish it; but in the case of their own persons men do not know by what means to nourish them. Is it to be supposed that

<sup>45</sup> The Chinese word *hsin* means both "heart" and "mind." Here the heart of original goodness is meant.

<sup>46</sup> "The lost heart of a child."

their regard for their own persons is inferior to their regard for a *t'ung* or a *tse*? Their want of reflection is extreme."

### Chapter XIV

1 Mencius said, "Men love every part of their persons; and as they love every part, so they (should) nourish every part. There is not an inch of skin which they do not love, and so there is not an inch of skin which they will not nourish. For examining whether his (way of nourishing) be good or not, what other rule is there but simply this, that a man determine, (by reflecting) on himself, where it should be applied?

2 "Some parts of the body are noble, and some ignoble; some great, and some small. The great must not be injured for the small, nor the noble for the ignoble. He who nourishes the little belonging to him is a small man; he who nourishes the great is a great man."<sup>47</sup>

3 "Here is a plantation-keeper, who neglects his *wu* and *chia*, and nourishes his small jujube trees;—he is a poor plantation-keeper.

4 "He who nourishes one of his fingers, neglecting <sup>48</sup> his shoulders and back, without knowing that he is doing so, is a man (who resembles) a hurried wolf."<sup>49</sup>

5 "A man who (only) eats and drinks is counted mean by others; because he nourishes what is little to the neglect of what is great.

6 "If a man, (fond of) eating and drinking, do (yet) not fail (in nourishing what in him is great), how should his mouth and belly be accounted as no more than an inch of skin?"<sup>50</sup>

### Chapter XV

1 The disciple Kung-tu asked, saying, "All are equally men, but some are great men, and others are little men; how is this?" Mencius replied, "Those who follow that part of themselves which is great are great men; those who follow that part which is little are little men."<sup>51</sup>

2 Kung-tu pursued, "All are equally men; but some follow that part of themselves which is great, and some that which is little; how is this?" Mencius said, "The ears and the eyes have it not in their office to think,

<sup>47</sup> This paragraph should read: "Now in our constitution there is a higher and a lower nature, and a smaller and a greater self. One should not develop the lower nature at the expense of the higher, or develop the smaller self at the expense of the greater self. He who attends to his smaller self becomes a small man, and he who attends to his greater self becomes a great man."

<sup>48</sup> "Losing."

<sup>49</sup> Should read: "deformed."

<sup>50</sup> "If a man eats and drinks, however, without forgetting about his greater self, then it may be said that the food taken into his mouth goes to nourish more than his external body."

<sup>51</sup> "Those who attend to their greater selves are great men; those who attend to their smaller selves are small men."

and are (liable to be) obscured by things (affecting them); and when one thing comes into contact with another, it simply leads it away. But it is in the office of the mind to think. By thinking, it gets (the right view of things); when neglecting to think, it fails to do this.<sup>52</sup> These—the senses and the mind—are what Heaven has given to us. Let a man first stand in (the supremacy of) the greater (and nobler) part of his constitution, and the smaller part will not be able to take it from him.<sup>53</sup> It is simply this which makes the great man.<sup>54</sup>

### *Chapter XVI*

1 Mencius said, "There is a nobility of Heaven, and there is a nobility of man. Benevolence, righteousness, self-consecration, and fidelity, with unwearied joy in the goodness (of these virtues),—these constitute the nobility of Heaven. To be a duke, a minister, or a great officer,—this constitutes the nobility of man.

2 "The men of antiquity cultivated their nobility of Heaven, and the nobility of man came in its train.

3 "The men of the present day cultivate their nobility of Heaven in order to seek for the nobility of man, and when they have obtained this, they throw away the other; their delusion is extreme. The issue is simply this, that they must lose (that nobility of man) as well."

### *Chapter XVII*

1 Mencius said, "To desire to be what is considered honourable is the common mind of men. And all men have what is (truly) honourable in themselves; only they do not think of it.

2 "The honour which man confers is not the truly good honour. Those to whom Chao-meng gave honourable rank he could make mean again.<sup>55</sup>

3 "It is said in the Book of Poetry,

'You have made us to drink to the full of your spirits;  
You have satiated us with your kindness;'

meaning that (the guests) were filled with benevolence and righteousness, and therefore did not wish for the fat meat and fine millet of men.

<sup>52</sup> "The function of the mind is thinking; when you think, you keep your mind, and when you don't think, you lose your mind."

<sup>53</sup> "One who cultivates his higher self will find that his lower self follows of its own accord."

<sup>54</sup> The whole section is very important. See my translation *Wisdom of Confucius* (Modern Lib.), Chap. XI.

<sup>55</sup> "What people usually consider as an elevated rank or honour is not true honour, for he whom Chao Meng (a powerful ruling family of Chin) has honoured, Chao Meng can also bring into dishonour."

When a good reputation and far-reaching praise fall to (a man's) person, he does not desire the elegant embroidered garments of men."<sup>56</sup>

### Chapter XVIII

1 Mencius said, "Benevolence subdues its opposite just as water subdues fire."<sup>57</sup> Those, however, who nowadays practise benevolence (do it) as if with a cup of water they could save a whole wagon-load of faggots which was on fire, and when the flames were not extinguished were to say that water cannot subdue fire. Such a course, moreover, is the greatest aid to what is not benevolent.<sup>58</sup>

2 "The final issue will simply be this, the loss (of that small amount of benevolence)."

### Chapter XIX

Mencius said. "Of all seeds the best are the five kinds of grain, but if they are not ripe, they are not equal to the *ti* or the *pai*.<sup>59</sup> So the value of benevolence lies simply in its being brought to maturity."

### Chapter XX

1 Mencius said, "Yi, in teaching men to shoot, made it a rule to draw the bow to the full, and his pupils were required to do the same.

2 "A master-workman, in teaching others, must use the compass and Shuns';—is it so?" Mencius said, "It is."

## BOOK VI, PART II

### Chapter II

1 Chiao of Ts'ao asked, saying, "(It is said,) 'All men may be Yaos and Shuns';—is it so?" Mencius said, "It is."

2 (Ch'iao went on), "I have heard that king Wen was ten cubits high, and T'ang nine. Now I am nine cubits and four inches in height; but I can do nothing but eat my millet. What am I to do to realize that saying?"

3 The reply was, "What has the thing to do with this,—(the question of size)? It all lies simply in acting as such. Here is a man whose strength was not equal to that of a duckling or chicken,—he was (then) a man

<sup>56</sup> "And when a man wears a mantle of fame, he does not care for the embroidered gown."

<sup>57</sup> "Kindness overcomes cruelty as water overcomes fire."

<sup>58</sup> "Those who practise kindness today are like those who take a cup of water to fight a car-load of burning fuel, and when the fire is not put out exclaim, 'Water cannot overcome fire.' This is merely to help those who do not believe in kindness."

<sup>59</sup> Cockles.

of no strength. (But) today he says, 'I can lift three thousand catties'; he is (now) a man of strength. And so, he who can lift the weight which Wu Huo lifted is just another Wu Huo. Why should a man make a want of ability the subject of his grief? It is only that he will not do the thing.

4 "To walk slowly, keeping behind his elders, is to perform the part of a younger. To walk rapidly, going before his elders, is to violate the duty of a younger. But is walking slowly what any man cannot do? It is (only) what he does not do. The course of Yao and Shun was simply that of filial piety and fraternal duty.

5 "Do you wear the clothes of Yao, repeat the words of Yao, and do the actions of Yao, and you will just be a Yao. And if you wear the clothes of Chieh, repeat the words of Chieh, and do the actions of Chieh, you will just be a Chieh."

6 (Chiao) said, "When I have an audience of the ruler of Tsou, I can ask him to let me have a house to lodge in. I wish to remain here, and receive instruction at your gate."

7 (Mencius) replied, "The way (of truth) is like a great road; it is not difficult to know it. The evil is only that men will not seek for it. Do you go home, and seek it, and you will have abundance of teachers."

### *Chapter XV*

1 Mencius said, "Shun rose (to the empire) from among the channelled fields. Fu Yüeh was called to office from the midst of his (building) frames and (earth-) beaters; Chiao Keh from his fish and salt; Kuan Yiwu, from the hands of the officer in charge of him; Sun Shu-ao from (his hiding by) the sea-shore; and Poli Hsi from the market-place.

2 "Thus, when Heaven is about to confer a great office on anyone, it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil; it exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty; and it confounds his undertakings. In all these ways it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies.<sup>60</sup>

3 "Men constantly err, but are afterwards able to reform. They are distressed in mind, and perplexed in thought, and then they arise to vigorous endeavour. When things have been evidenced in men's looks, and set forth in their words, then they understand them.

<sup>60</sup> "Thus when Heaven is about to entrust a man with great work, it first causes distress to his mind, belabours his muscles and frame, starves his body, subjects him to want, and frustrates what he sets out to do. This is to stimulate his ambition, strengthen his character, and increase his capacity for doing what he could not do before."

4 "If a ruler have not about his court families attached to the laws and able officers, and if abroad there are no hostile States or other external calamities, the State will generally come to ruin.<sup>61</sup>

5 "From such things we see how life springs from sorrow and calamity, and death from ease and pleasure."

## BOOK VII, PART II

### *Chapter XIV*

1 Mencius said, "The people are the most important element (in a country); the Spirits of the land and grain are the next; the ruler is the least important."

### *Chapter XXXVIII*

4 "From Confucius to now there are (only) a hundred years and (somewhat) more;—so far from being remote is the distance from the sage in point of time, and so very near at hand is the sage's residence. In these circumstances, is there no one (to transmit his doctrines)? Yea, is there no one?"

<sup>61</sup> "If there be not old official families and wise counsellors within and enemies and foreign threats without, such a country often perishes."

# Motse

## The Religious Teacher

### INTRODUCTION

MOTSE, OR MO TI, is the only indigenous religious teacher China has produced. Both in method of thinking, and in his ideas, he seemed to stand on his own, although in his earlier chapters, there are some similarities with the Confucian point of view. For Motse seemed to have risen with his teachings in revolt against Confucianism. Among all Chinese philosophers, he comes closest to the Christian teachings, for he alone taught universal love as the basis of society and of peace, showed that Heaven loved the people equally, and insisted on the belief in the existence of the spirits. It is said that some missionaries are scared, instead of feeling encouraged, to find that the doctrines of the love of God and universal love were already known to the Chinese. It is almost as disheartening as reaching the South Pole to find that someone has already been there before. On the other hand, the broad-minded should be pleased that what is true can be independently discovered by the human mind. What should really discourage them is that the Chinese as a nation have rejected this doctrine after its reaching an enormous influence. They have rejected it so completely that the text of Motse, until our own generation, was among the most completely neglected of China's ancient texts, while all its early commentaries are lost.

Motse rose in revolt against Confucianism. He lived from 468 B.C. (or 441) to 401 (or 376), and was thus roughly one century behind Confucius. As Confucius died in 479, he might be said to have been born in the generation when his influence was spreading. Most probably born in Lu, Confucius' own country, he was fully familiar with the Confucian classics, like the *Book of Poetry* and *Book of History*. In temper he was more democratic than Confucius. Some of the most unflattering pictures

of the Confucianists of his day come from his works. Huainantse tells us that "Motse studied the learning of the Confucianists and was taught the methods of Confucius. Deciding that their ceremonies were too complicated and difficult of practice, that the expensive funerals were a waste of money and impoverished the people, that their dresses interfered with proper attending to affairs, he renounced the teachings of the Chou Dynasty, and went back to (the simple and theocratic) Hsia system." Against Confucian love of music, he wrote or left three essays "Against Music." Against Confucian belief in fate, he left three essays "Against Fatalism." Against Confucian extravagance, he left several essays on "Thrift" and "Thrift Funerals." Against Confucian agnosticism, he left three essays on "Recognizing the Spirits." Besides the two essays "Anti-Confucianism," such ideas are present in most of his essays.

On the positive side, he enunciated the clearest teachings "against offensive wars," and even developed in great detail the technique of defensive warfare. He also developed a system of logical method, and it was his followers who carried it further and became known as the Chinese "sophists," among whom Hueitse, constantly referred to by Chuangtse, was one. But what is more, Motse's teachings were a stern call to action, and unlike the other schools, showed an evangelistic zeal. Mencius referred to him as one who "would wear his head and his heels off to benefit the world." He taught and practised altruism, frugality and the hard life. Chuangtse said that his followers "wore coarse garments and walked in sandals, and day and night without cease lived the hard life as their goal." He sneered at the Confucianists, comparing them to bells which would sound only when struck, and not sound when not struck. Huainantse tells us that his "hundred eighty disciples would go through fire and walk on knives and face death without turning back."

His influence grew so great that for two centuries after Confucius, the Motseanists became the rivals of Confucianists. Mencius deplored the decay of Confucianism and said that the people of his time would be either followers of Motse or else followers of Yang Chu. In fact, it almost became an established religion. Chuangtse says, 'his followers "regarded their Master as a Sage. They all wanted to be his priests, in the hope of succeeding to him."

Why its influence suddenly stopped completely remains a matter of speculation. Persecution could not do it, and there was no report of persecution. One explanation is the rise of Mencius, who powerfully combated its influence. Another explanation is that the Han Emperors made Confucianism into almost a state religion. A very possible explanation is that the warrior evangelists simply perished in the wars of the



First Emperor of Ch'in. Which brings us to the trust explanation that Quixotic heroism and extreme altruism did not appeal to the native Chinese common sense.

Of all ancient texts, Motse can benefit most from editing. His essays, evidently written by his followers, contain many repetitions, so that thrèe essays on the same subject may well be different versions of the same teachings, rather than a consecutive development of the same subject. I have made selections from the English translation of Y. P. Mei (*The Works of Motse*, Probsthain) which makes use of the best text of Sun Yi-jang. The baldness of the style is original, consonant with Motse's teachings on simplicity and frugality. His condemnation of offensive wars is direct to the point of naïveté, but some such plain speaking seems needed at the present time. That he has some wit is shown from the anecdotes about him I have collected from the last chapters of his works.

In contrast to Motse's teaching of universal love, I could produce a Chinese fascist, Shangtse, (fourth century B.C.) whose teachings are an exact replica of totalitarianism. Shangtse taught war and agriculture, but he taught agriculture because he believed peasants made the best soldiers. He exalted war and glorified the rule of force. As a result of the actual applications of his teachings, the dictatorial state of Ch'in came to power and vanquished all China. However, there is enough fascism in the West. The important thing is that both fascism and the doctrine of universal love collapsed in China and have never been tried again. Only in this light can we truly appreciate Confucianism.

# Motse

## The Religious Teacher

*Translated by Y. P. Mei*

### ON THE NECESSITY OF STANDARDS

*(Chapter 4)*

MOTSE said: To accomplish anything whatsoever one must have standards. None has yet accomplished anything without them. The gentlemen fulfilling their duties as general and councillors have their standards. Even the artisans performing their tasks also have their standards. The artisans make square objects according to the square, circular objects according to the compasses; they draw straight lines with the carpenter's line and find the perpendicular by a pendulum. All artisans, whether skilled or unskilled, employ these five standards. Only, the skilled workers are accurate. Though the unskilled labourers have not attained accuracy, yet they do better by following these standards than otherwise. Thus all artisans follow the standards in their work.

Now, the government of the empire and that of the large states do not observe their standards. This shows the governors are even less intelligent than the artisans.

What, then, should be taken as the proper standard in government? How will it do for everybody to imitate his parents? There are numerous parents in the world but few are magnanimous. For everybody to imitate his parents is to imitate the unmagnanimous. Imitating the unmagnanimous cannot be said to be following the proper standard. How will it do for everybody to follow his teacher? There are numerous teachers in the world but few are magnanimous. For everybody to imitate his teacher is to imitate the unmagnanimous. Imitating the unmagnanimous cannot be taken as following the proper standard. How will it do for

everybody to imitate his ruler? There are many rulers in the world but few are magnanimous. For everybody to imitate the ruler is to imitate the unmagnanimous. Imitating the unmagnanimous cannot be taken as following the right standard. So then neither the parents nor the teacher nor the ruler should be accepted as the standard in government.

What then should be taken as the standard in government? Nothing better than following Heaven. Heaven is all-inclusive and impartial in its activities, abundant and unceasing in its blessings, and lasting and untiring in its guidance. And, so, when the sage-kings had accepted Heaven as their standard, they measured every action and enterprise by Heaven. What Heaven desired they would carry out, what Heaven abominated they refrained from.

Now, what is it that Heaven desires, and what that it abominates? Certainly Heaven desires to have men benefit and love one another, and abominates to have them hate and harm one another. How do we know that Heaven desires to have men love and benefit one another and abominates to have them hate and harm one another? Because it loves and benefits men universally. How do we know that it loves and benefits men universally? Because it claims all and accepts offerings from all. All states in the world, large or small, are cities of Heaven, and all people, young or old, honourable or humble, are its subjects; for they all graze oxen and sheep, feed dogs and pigs, and prepare clean wine and cakes to sacrifice to Heaven. Does this not mean that Heaven claims all and accepts offerings from all? Since Heaven does claim all and accepts offerings from all, what then can make us say that it does not desire men to love and benefit one another? Hence those who love and benefit others Heaven will bless. Those who hate and harm others Heaven will curse, for it is said that he who murders the innocent will be visited by misfortune. How else can we explain the fact that men, murdering each other, will be cursed by Heaven? Thus we are certain that Heaven desires to have men love and benefit one another and abominates to have them hate and harm one another.

The ancient sage-kings, Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu loved the people of the world universally, leading them to reverence Heaven and worship the spirits. Many were their benefits to the people. And, thereupon Heaven blessed them, establishing them emperors; and all the feudal lords of the empire showed them respect. (On the other hand) the wicked kings, Chieh, Chow, Yu, and Li, hated all the people in the world, seducing the people to curse Heaven and ridicule the spirits. Great were their injuries to the people. Thereupon Heaven brought them calamity, depriving them of their empire and their lives; and posterity condemned them to this day. Chieh, Chow, Yu, and Li, then,

are those that committed evil and were visited by calamities. And Yü, T'ang, Wen and Wu are those that loved and benefited the people and obtained blessings. Thus we have those who obtained blessings because they loved and benefited the people as well as those who were visited by calamities because they hated and harmed the people.

### ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A COMMON STANDARD (III)<sup>1</sup> (Chapter 13)

Motse said: The interest of the wise (ruler) lies in carrying out what makes for order among the people and avoiding what makes for confusion.

But what is it that makes for order among the people?

When the administration of the ruler answers to the desires of the people there will be order, otherwise there will be confusion.

How do we know it is so?

When the administration of the ruler answers to the desires of the subjects, it manifests an understanding of the approvals and disapprovals of the people. When there is such an understanding, the good will be discovered and rewarded and the bad will be discovered and punished, and the country will surely have order. When the administration of the ruler does not answer to the desires of the subjects, it shows a lack of understanding of the approvals and disapprovals of the subjects. When there is no such understanding then the good will not be discovered and rewarded and the bad will not be discovered and punished. With the good unrewarded and the evil unpunished, such a government will surely put the country into disorder. Therefore when rewards and punishments do not answer to the desires of the people, the matter has to be carefully looked into.

But how can the desires of the people (being so many and various) be met?

Therefore Motse said: It can be done only by adopting the principle of Identification with the Superior in government.<sup>2</sup>

How do we know the principle of Identification with the Superior can govern the empire?

Why not then examine the administration and the theory of government of the ancient times? In the beginning there was no ruler and everybody was independent. Since everyone was independent, there would be one purpose when there was one man, ten purposes when

<sup>1</sup> The title, *Shang T'ung*, is translated by Mr. Y. P. Mei as "Identification with the Superior," which I believe is unjustified. See Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Should read: "It can be done only by exalting the common, unified standard of right in government."

there were ten men, a hundred purposes when there were a hundred men, a thousand purposes when there were a thousand men and so on until the number of men became innumerable and the number of different purposes became innumerable with it. And all of them approved their own ideas and disapproved those of others. And there was strife among the strong and struggle among the weak.

Thereupon Heaven wished to unify the standards in the world. The virtuous was selected and made emperor. Conscious of the insufficiency of his power alone to govern the empire, the emperor chose the next best (in virtue and wisdom) and honoured them to be the three ministers. Conscious of the insufficiency of their powers alone to assist the emperor, the three ministers in turn divided the empire into feudal states and assigned them to feudal lords. Conscious of the insufficiency of his power alone to govern all that were within his four borders, the feudal lord in turn selected his next best and commissioned them ministers and secretaries. Conscious of the insufficiency of their power alone to assist their feudal lord, the ministers and secretaries again selected their next best and appointed them district heads and clan patriarchs. Therefore in appointing the three ministers, the feudal lords, the ministers and secretaries, and the district heads and clan patriarchs, the emperor was not selecting them for wealth and honour, leisure and ease. It was to employ them to help in administration and jurisdiction. Hence, when Heaven established the empire and located the capital and commissioned the sovereign, kings, lords, and dukes, and appointed secretaries, scholars, professors, and elders,—it was not to give them ease, but only to divide up the task and let them help carry out the light of Heaven.

Why are the superiors now unable to govern their subordinates, and the subordinates unwilling to serve their superiors? It is because of a mutual disregard.

What is the reason for this? The reason is a difference in standards. Whenever standards differ there will be opposition. The ruler may think a man good and reward him. The man, though rewarded by the ruler, yet by the same act provokes the condemnation of the people. Therefore those who do good are not necessarily encouraged by rewards. The ruler may think a man evil and punish him. This man, though punished by the ruler, yet at the same time receives the approval of the people. Therefore those who do evil are not necessarily obstructed by punishments. Thus reward and honour from the ruler cannot encourage the good and his denunciation and punishment cannot prevent the evil. What is the reason for this? The reason is a difference in standards.

But how can the standards in the world be unified?

Motse said: Why not let each member of the clan organize his purposes and identify them with those of the patriarch? And let the patriarch give laws and proclaim to the clan: "Whoever discovers a benefactor to the clan shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor to the clan shall report it. Whoever reports the benefactor of the clan upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the clan himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the group will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor of the clan upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the clan himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the group will condemn him." Thereupon all the members of the clan wish to obtain reward and honour and avoid denunciation and punishment from their superior. Seeing the good they will report; seeing the evil they will report. And the patriarch can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the clan will surely have order. Now, why is it that the clan becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.<sup>3</sup>

Now that the clan is in order, is that all there is of the way of governing the feudal state?

By no means. The state is composed of many clans. They all like their own clan and dislike other clans. And there is strife among the strong and struggle among the weak. Therefore the clan patriarchs should again organize the purposes in the clan and identify them with those of the feudal lord. The feudal lord also should give laws and should proclaim to the state: "Whoever discovers a benefactor of the state shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor of the state shall report it. Whoever reports a benefactor of the state upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the state himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the people will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor of the state upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the state himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the people will condemn him." Thereupon all people in the state wish to obtain reward and honour and avoid denunciation and punishment from their superior. Seeing the good they will report, seeing the evil they will report. And the feudal lord can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the feudal state will surely have order. Now, why is it that the state becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Should read: "is based on unification of the standard of right."

<sup>4</sup> See Note 3.

Now that the feudal state is in order, is that all there is to the way of governing the empire?

By no means. The empire is composed of many states. They all like their own state and dislike other states. And there is strife among the strong and struggle among the weak. Therefore the feudal lord should again organize the purposes in the state and identify them with those of the emperor. The emperor also should give laws and should proclaim to the empire: "Whoever discovers a benefactor of the empire shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor of the empire shall report it. Whoever reports a benefactor of the empire upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the state himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the people will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the empire himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the people will condemn him." Thereupon all the people in the empire will wish to obtain reward and honour and avoid denunciation and punishment from their emperor. Seeing the good and the evil they will report. And the emperor can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the empire will surely have order. Now why is it that the empire becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.<sup>5</sup>

Now that the empire becomes orderly, the emperor will further organize the purposes in the empire and identify them with the Will of Heaven.<sup>6</sup>

## UNIVERSAL LOVE (II)

### (Chapter 15)

Motse said: The purpose of the magnanimous<sup>7</sup> is to be found in procuring benefits for the world and eliminating its calamities.

But what are the benefits of the world and what its calamities?

Motse said: Mutual attacks upon states, mutual usurpation among houses, mutual injuries among individuals; the lack of grace and loyalty between ruler and ruled, the lack of affection and filial piety between father and son, the lack of harmony between elder and younger brothers—these are the major calamities in the world.

But whence did these calamities arise, out of mutual love?

<sup>5</sup> See Note 3.

<sup>6</sup> Should read: "The emperor will again gather all the standards of right of the world and unify them with (the will of) Heaven. See "Will of Heaven," I.

<sup>7</sup> *Jen*, variously translated as "benevolence," "charity," "love," "kindness." *Jenjen* philosophically means the "true man" in Confucianism, and in general usage the "good, kind men." Throughout this translation the word "magnanimous" refers to *jen*.

Motse said: They arise out of want of mutual love. At present feudal lords have learned only to love their own states and not those of others. Therefore they do not scruple about attacking other states. The heads of houses have learned only to love their own houses and not those of others. Therefore they do not scruple about usurping other houses. And individuals have learned only to love themselves and not others. Therefore they do not scruple about injuring others. When feudal lords do not love one another there will be war on the fields. When heads of houses do not love one another they will usurp one another's power. When individuals do not love one another they will injure one another. When ruler and ruled do not love one another they will not be gracious and loyal. When father and son do not love each other they will not be affectionate and filial. When elder and younger brothers do not love each other they will not be harmonious. When nobody in the world loves any other, naturally the strong will overpower the weak, the many will oppress the few, the wealthy will mock the poor, the honoured will disdain the humble, the cunning will deceive the simple. Therefore all the calamities, strifes, complaints, and hatred in the world have arisen out of want of mutual love. Therefore the benevolent disapproved of this want.

Now that there is disapproval, how can we have the condition altered?

Motse said: It is to be altered by the way of universal love and mutual aid.

But what is the way of universal love and mutual aid?

Motse said: It is to regard the state of others as one's own, the houses of others as one's own, the persons of others as one's self. When feudal lords love one another there will be no more war; when heads of houses love one another there will be no more mutual usurpation; when individuals love one another there will be no more mutual injury. When ruler and ruled love each other they will be gracious and loyal; when father and son love each other they will be affectionate and filial; when elder and younger brothers love each other they will be harmonious. When all the people in the world love one another, then the strong will not overpower the weak, the many will not oppress the few, the wealthy will not mock the poor, the honoured will not disdain the humble, and the cunning will not deceive the simple. And it is all due to mutual love that calamities, strifes, complaints, and hatred are prevented from arising. Therefore the benevolent exalt it.

But the gentlemen of the world would say: "So far so good. It is of course very excellent when love becomes universal. But it is only a difficult and distant ideal."

Motse said: This is simply because the gentlemen of the world do not



recognize what is to the benefit of the world, or understand what is its calamity. Now, to besiege a city, to fight in the fields, or to achieve a name at the cost of death—these are what men find difficult. Yet when the superior encourages them, the multitude can do them. Besides, universal love and mutual aid is quite different from these. Whoever loves others is loved by others; whoever benefits others is benefited by others; whoever hates others is hated by others; whoever injures others is injured by others. Then, what difficulty is there with it (universal love)? Only, the ruler fails to embody it in his government and the ordinary man in his conduct.<sup>8</sup>

### UNIVERSAL LOVE (III) (Chapter 16)

Yet the objection is not all exhausted. It is asked: "It may be a good thing, but can it be of any use?"

Motse replied: If it were not useful then even I would disapprove of it. But how can there be anything that is good but not useful? Let us consider the matter from both sides. Suppose there are two men. Let one of them hold to partiality and the other to universality. Then the advocate of partiality would say to himself, how can I take care of my friend as I do of myself, how can I take care of his parents as my own? Therefore when he finds his friend hungry he would not feed him, and when he finds him cold he would not clothe him. In his illness he would not minister to him, and when he is dead he would not bury him. Such is the word and such is the deed of the advocate of partiality. The advocate of universality is quite unlike this both in word and in deed. He would say to himself, I have heard that to be a superior man one should take care of his friend as he does of himself, and take care of his friend's parents as his own. Therefore when he finds his friend hungry he would feed him, and when he finds him cold he would clothe him. In his sickness he would serve him, and when he is dead he would bury him. Such is the word and such is the deed of the advocate of universality.

These two persons then are opposed to each other in word and also in deed. Suppose they are sincere in word and decisive in deed so that their word and deed are made to agree like the two parts of a tally, and that there is no word but what is realized in deed, then let us consider further: Suppose a war is on, and one is in armour and helmet ready to join the

<sup>8</sup> This is half of the second essay in "Universal Love," of which there are three, with repetitions. Motse further proves his point by illustrations from ancient history and answers criticisms of Universal Love as "impracticable," etc. The idea of Universal Love is closely connected with "the will of Heaven" and is further developed all through Motse's works.

force, life and death are not predictable. Or suppose one is commissioned a deputy by the ruler to such far countries like Pa, Yüeh, Ch'i and Ching, and the arrival and return are quite uncertain. Now (under such circumstances) let us inquire upon whom would one lay the trust of one's family and parents. Would it be upon the universal friend or upon the partial friend? It seems to me, on occasions like these, there are no fools in the world. Even if he is a person who objects to universal love, he will lay the trust upon the universal friend all the same. This is verbal objection to the principle but actual selection by it—this is self-contradiction between one's word and deed. It is incomprehensible then, why people should object to universal love when they hear it.

Yet the objection is still not exhausted. It raises the question, when one does not think in terms of benefits and harm to one's parents would it be filial piety?

Motse replied: Now let us inquire about the plans of the filial sons for their parents. I may ask, when they plan for their parents, whether they desire to have others love or hate them? Judging from the whole doctrine (of filial piety), it is certain that they desire to have others love their parents. Now, what should I do first in order to attain this? Should I first love others' parents in order that they would love my parents in return, or should I first hate others' parents in order that they would love my parents in return? Of course I should first love others' parents in order that they would love my parents in return. Hence those who desire to be filial to one another's parents, if they have to choose (between whether they should love or hate others' parents), had best first love and benefit others' parents. Would any one suspect that all the filial sons are stupid and incorrigible (in loving their own parents)? We may again inquire about it. It is said in the "Ta Ya" among the books of the ancient kings: "No idea is not given its due value; no virtue is not rewarded. When a peach is thrown to us, we would return with a prune." This is to say whoever loves others will be loved and whoever hates others will be hated. It is then quite incomprehensible why people should object to universal love when they hear it.

## CONDEMNATION OF OFFENSIVE WAR (I)

### (Chapter 17)

Suppose a man enters the orchard of another and steals the other's peaches and plums. Hearing of it the public will condemn it; laying hold of him the authorities will punish him. Why? Because he injures others to profit himself. As to seizing dogs, pigs, chickens, and young

pigs from another, it is even more unrighteous than to steal peaches and plums from his orchard. Why? Because it causes others to suffer more,<sup>9</sup> and it is more inhumane and criminal. When it comes to entering another's stable and appropriating the other's horses and oxen, it is more inhumane than to seize the dogs, pigs, chickens, and young pigs of another. Why? Because others are caused to suffer more; when others are caused to suffer more, then the act is more inhumane and criminal. Finally, as to murdering the innocent, stripping him of his clothing, dispossessing him of his spear and sword, it is even more unrighteous than to enter another's stable and appropriate his horses and oxen. Why? Because it causes others to suffer more; when others are caused to suffer more, then the act is more inhumane and criminal.

All the gentlemen of the world know that they should condemn these things, calling them unrighteous. But when it comes to the great attack of states, they do not know that they should condemn it. On the contrary they applaud it, calling it righteous. Can this be said to be knowing the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness?

The murder of one person is called unrighteous and incurs one death penalty. Following this argument the murder of ten persons will be ten times as unrighteous and there should be ten death penalties; the murder of a hundred persons will be a hundred times as unrighteous and there should be a hundred death penalties. All the gentlemen of the world know that they should condemn these things, calling them unrighteous. But when it comes to the great unrighteousness of attacking states, they do not know that they should condemn it. On the contrary, they applaud it, calling it righteous. And they are really ignorant of its being unrighteous. Hence they have recorded their judgment to bequeath to their posterity. If they did know that it is unrighteous, then why would they record their false judgment to bequeath to posterity?

Now, if there were a man who, upon seeing a little blackness, should say it is black, but, upon seeing much, should say it is white; then we should think he could not tell the difference between black and white. If, upon tasting a little bitterness one should say it is bitter, but, upon tasting much, should say it is sweet; then we should think he could not tell the difference between bitter and sweet. Now, when a little wrong is committed people know that they should condemn it, but when such a great wrong as attacking a state is committed, people do not know that they should condemn it. On the contrary, it is applauded, called righteous. Can this be said to be knowing the difference between the righteous and

<sup>9</sup> A clause seems to have been lost here, when we compare this sentence with the following sentences expressing the same meaning. The correct text here seems also to be, "Because others are caused to suffer more; when others are caused to suffer more, it is more inhumane and criminal."

unrighteous? Hence we know the gentlemen of the world are confused about the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness.

## CONDEMNATION OF OFFENSIVE WAR (II)

### (Chapter 18)

Now, about a country going to war. If it is in winter it will be too cold; if it is summer it will be too hot. So it should be neither in winter nor in summer. If it is in spring it will take people away from sowing and planting; if it is in autumn it will take people away from reaping and harvesting. Should they be taken away in either of these seasons, innumerable people would die of hunger and cold. And, when the army sets out, the bamboo arrows, the feather flags, the house tents, the armour, the shields, the sword hilts—innumerable quantities of these will break and rot and never come back. The spears, the lances, the swords, the poniards, the chariots, the carts—innumerable quantities of these will break and rot and never come back. Then innumerable horses and oxen will start out fat and come back lean or will not return at all. And innumerable people will die because their food will be cut off and cannot be supplied on account of the great distances of the roads. And innumerable people will be sick and die of the constant danger and the irregularity of eating and drinking and the extremes of hunger and over-eating. Then, the army will be lost in large numbers or entirely; in either case the number will be innumerable. And this means the spirits will lose their worshippers, and the number of these will also be innumerable.

Why then does the government deprive the people of their opportunities and benefits to such a great extent? It has been answered: "I covet the fame of the victor and the possessions obtainable through the conquest. So I do it."

Motse said: But when we consider the victory as such, there is nothing useful about it. When we consider the possessions obtained through it, it does not even make up for the loss. Now about the siege of a city of three *li* or a *kuo*<sup>10</sup> of seven *li*—if these could be obtained without the use of weapons or the killing of lives, it would be all right. But (as a matter of fact) those killed must be counted by the ten thousand, those widowed or left solitary must be counted by the thousand, before a city of three *li* or a *kuo* of seven *li* could be captured. Moreover the states of ten thousand chariots now have empty towns to be counted by the thousand, which can be entered without conquest; and their extensive lands to be counted by the ten thousand (of *mu*),<sup>11</sup> which can be cultivated without conquest. So, land is abundant but people are few. Now to pursue the people to death and aggravate the danger feared by both

<sup>10</sup> Outer city.

<sup>11</sup> A *mu* is one-sixth of an acre.

superiors and subordinates in order to obtain an empty city—this is to give up what is needed and to treasure what is already in abundance. Such an undertaking is not in accordance with the interest of the country.

Those who endeavour to gloss over offensive wars would say: "These states perished because they could not gather and employ their multitudes. I can gather and employ my multitudes and wage war with them; who, then, dare to be unsubmitive?"

Motse said: You might be able to gather and employ your multitudes, but can you compare yourself with the ancient Ho Lü of Wu? Ho Lü of Wu (about 510 B.C.) in the ancient days drilled his soldiers seven years. With armour on and weapons in hand they could cover three hundred *li* (in a day) before encamping (for the night). Passing Chu Lin, they emerged at the narrow Pass of Min. They engaged in battle (with the state of Ch'u) at Po Chü. Subduing Ch'u, (Ho Lü) gave audience to Sung and Lu. By the time of Fu Ch'ai,<sup>12</sup> he attacked Ch'i in the north, encamped on the Wen River, fought at Ai Ling and greatly defeated Ch'i and compelled surety at Kuei Chi. None of the nine tribes dared to show disrespect. Reaching home, however, he would not reward the orphaned or give to the numerous rustics. He depended on his own might, gloated over his success, praised his own cleverness, and neglected instructing and training his people. He built the Monument of Ku Su<sup>13</sup> which was not completed even in seven years. By this time (the people of Wu) felt tired and disheartened. Seeing the friction between the superior and the subordinates in Wu, Kou Chien of Yüeh gathered his multitudes to take revenge. He broke into its *kuo* on the north, moved away its royal boat, and surrounded its palace. And thus Wu perished. . . .

## XIX. CONDEMNATION OF OFFENSIVE WAR (III)

### (Chapter 19)

Motse said: What does the world now praise to be good? Is not an act praised because it is useful to Heaven on high, to the spirits in the middle sphere, and to the people below? Certainly no other reason is needed for praise than to be useful to Heaven on high, to the spirits in the middle, and to the people below. Even the stupid would say it is praiseworthy when it is helpful to Heaven on high, to the spirits in the middle, and to the people below. And what the world agrees on is just the way of the sage-kings.

<sup>12</sup> Ho Lü's son (about 490 B.C.).

<sup>13</sup> Capital of the state of Wu, now Soochow.

Now to capture a state and to destroy an army, to disturb and torture the people, and to set at naught the aspirations of the sages by confusion—is this intended to bless Heaven? But the people of Heaven are gathered together to besiege the towns belonging to Heaven. This is to murder men of Heaven and dispossess the spirits of their altars and to ruin the state and to kill the sacrificial animals. It is then not a blessing to Heaven on high. Is it intended to bless the spirits? But men of Heaven are murdered, spirits are deprived of their sacrifices, the earlier kings<sup>14</sup> are neglected, the multitude are tortured and the people are scattered; it is then not a blessing to the spirits in the middle. Is it intended to bless the people? But the blessing of the people by killing them off must be very meagre. And when we calculate the expense, which is the root of the calamities of living, we find the property of innumerable people is exhausted. It is, then, not a blessing to the people below either.

Have we not heard it said that, when a warring state goes on an expedition, of the officers there must be several hundred, of the common people there must be several thousand, and of the soldiers and prisoners there must be ten thousand, before the army can set out? It may last for several years, or at the shortest, several months. So, the superior will have no time to attend to their offices, the farmers will have no time to sow or reap, the women will have no time to weave or spin: that is, the state will lose its men and the people will neglect their vocations. Besides the chariots will break and horses will be exhausted. As to tents, army supplies, and soldiers' equipment—if one-fifth of these can remain (after the war) it would already be beyond expectation. Moreover, innumerable men will be missing and lost on the way, and will become sick from the long distances, meagre rations, hunger and cold, and die in the ditches. Now the calamity to the people and the world is tremendous. Yet the rulers enjoy doing it. This means they enjoy injuring and exterminating the people; is this not perversity?

## THE WILL OF HEAVEN (I)

### (Chapter 26)

Now, what does Heaven desire and what does it abominate? Heaven desires righteousness and abominates unrighteousness. . . . But how do we know Heaven desires righteousness and abominates unrighteousness? For, with righteousness the world lives and without it the world dies; with it the world becomes rich and without it the world becomes poor; with it the world becomes orderly and without it the world

<sup>14</sup> Meaning the ancestral spirits of the state.

becomes chaotic. And Heaven likes to have the world live and dislikes to have it die, likes to have it rich and dislikes to have it poor, and likes to have it orderly and dislikes to have it disorderly. Therefore we know Heaven desires righteousness and abominates unrighteousness.

How do we know Heaven loves the people? Because it teaches them all. How do we know it teaches them all? Because it claims them all. How do we know it claims them all? Because it accepts sacrifices from them all. How do we know it accepts sacrifices from all? Because within the four seas all who live on grains feed oxen and sheep with grass, and dogs and pigs with grains, and prepare clean cakes and wine to do sacrifice to God on High and the spirits. Claiming all the people, why will Heaven not love them? Moreover, as I have said, for the murder of one innocent individual there will be one calamity. Who is it that murders the innocent? It is man. Who is it that sends down the calamity? It is Heaven. If Heaven should be thought of as not loving the people, why should it send down calamities for the murder of man by man? So, I know, Heaven loves the people.

To obey the will of Heaven is to accept righteousness as the standard. To oppose the will of Heaven is to accept force as the standard. Now what will the standard of righteousness do?

Motse said: He who rules a large state does not attack small states: he who rules a large house does not molest small houses. The strong does not plunder the weak. The honoured does not disdain the humble. The clever does not deceive the stupid. This is beneficial to Heaven above, beneficial to the spirits in the middle sphere, and beneficial to the people below. Being beneficial to these three it is beneficial to all. So the most excellent name is attributed to such a man and he is called sage-king.

The standard of force is different from this. It is contradictory to this in word and opposed to this in deed like galloping with back to back. Leading a large state, he whose standard is force, attacks small states; leading a large house he molests small houses. The strong plunders the weak, the honoured disdains the humble. The clever deceives the stupid. This is not beneficial to Heaven above, or to the spirits in the middle sphere, or to the people below. Not being beneficial to these three, it is beneficial to none. So, the most evil name in the world is attributed to him and he is called the wicked king.

Motse said: The will of Heaven to me is like the compasses to the wheelwright and the square to the carpenter. The wheelwright and the carpenter measure all the square and circular objects with their square and compasses and accept those that fit as correct and reject those that do not fit as incorrect. The writings of the gentlemen of the world of

the present day cannot be all loaded (in a cart), and their doctrines cannot be exhaustively enumerated. They endeavour to convince the feudal lords on the one hand and the scholars on the other. But from magnanimity and righteousness they are far off. How do we know? Because I have the most competent standard in the world to measure them with.

## THE WILL OF HEAVEN (II)

(*Chapter 27*)

And hence Motse said: If the gentlemen of the world really desire to follow the way and benefit the people, they must not disobey the will of Heaven, the origin of magnanimity and righteousness.

Now that we must obey the will of Heaven, what does the will of Heaven desire and what does it abominate? Motse said: The will of Heaven abominates the large state which attacks small states, the large house which molests small houses, the strong who plunder the weak, the clever who deceive the stupid, and the honoured who disdain the humble—these are what the will of Heaven abominates. On the other hand, it desires people having energy to work for each other, those knowing the way to teach each other, and those possessing wealth to share with each other. And it desires the superior diligently to attend to government and the subordinates diligently to attend to their work. . . .

The rule of Heaven over the world is not unlike the rule of the feudal lord over the state. In ruling the state does the feudal lord desire his ministers and people to work for mutual disadvantage? If leading a large state one attacks small states, if leading a large house one molests small houses—if by doing this one seeks reward and commendation (from the feudal lord) he cannot obtain it. On the contrary, punishment will visit him. Now, the rule of Heaven over the world is not unlike this. If leading a large state one attacks small states, if leading a large house one molests small houses—if by doing this one seeks reward and commendation (from Heaven) he cannot obtain it. On the contrary, punishment will visit him. When (man) does not do what Heaven desires, but does what Heaven abominates, Heaven will also not do what man desires but do what he abominates. What man abominates are disease and calamities. Therefore not to do what Heaven desires but do what it abominates is to lead the multitudes in the world to calamity. . . .

Now Heaven loves the whole world universally. Everything is pre-



pared <sup>15</sup> for the good of man. Even the tip of a hair is the work of Heaven. Substantial may be said of the benefits that are enjoyed by man. Yet there is no service in return. And they do not even know this to be unmagnanimous and unfortunate. This is why I say the gentlemen understand only trifles and not things of importance.

Moreover I know Heaven loves men dearly not without reason. Heaven ordered the sun, the moon, and the stars to enlighten and guide them. Heaven ordained the four seasons, Spring, Autumn, Winter and Summer, to regulate them. Heaven sent down snow, frost, rain, and dew to grow the five grains and flax and silk so that the people could use and enjoy them. Heaven established the hills and rivers, ravines and valleys, and arranged many things to minister to man's good or bring him evil. He appointed the dukes and lords to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked, and to gather metal and wood, birds and beasts, and to engage in cultivating the five grains and flax and silk to provide for the people's food and clothing. This has been taking place from antiquity to the present. Suppose there is a man who is deeply fond of his son and has used his energy to the limit to work for his benefit. But when the son grows up he returns no love to the father. The gentlemen of the world will all call him unmagnanimous and miserable. Now Heaven loves the whole world universally. Everything is prepared for the good of man. The work of Heaven extends to even the smallest things that are enjoyed by man. Such benefits may indeed be said to be substantial, yet there is no service in return. And they do not even know this to be unmagnanimous. This is why I say the gentlemen of the world understand only trifles but not things of importance.

### THE WILL OF HEAVEN (III)

#### (Chapter 28)

How do we know the gentlemen of the world are far from righteousness? For, the lords in the large states compete in saying: "Being a big state, if I do not attack the small states, in what way am I big?" Therefore they mustered their warriors and soldiers, and arranged their boat and chariot forces to attack some innocent state. They broke into its borders, cut down its fields, felled its trees, tore down its inner and outer city walls, and filled up its moats and ditches, burned its ancestral temples and seized and killed its sacrificial victims. Of the people the strong were killed, the weak were brought back in chains and ropes. The men were turned into servants and grooms and prisoners. The women were

<sup>15</sup> The term here used in the text is "chiao sui." Its exact meaning is not ascertainable.—*Original note.*

made to be waitresses (to pour wine). Yet, the warring lord did not even know that this is unmagnanimous and unrighteous. He announced to the neighbouring lords: "I have attacked a state, defeated an army, and killed so many generals." And the neighbouring lords did not know that this is unmagnanimous and unrighteous either, but with furs and silk sent envoys to offer congratulations. And the warring lords were even doubly ignorant of its being unmagnanimous and unrighteous. They recorded it on the bamboos and silk and kept them in the archives so that the descendants would imitate their royal ancestors, saying: "Why not let us open up the archives and let us learn of the achievements of our ancestors?" Then they would surely not learn: "Such and such is the regime of Wu," but would learn: "I have attacked states, reversed armies, and killed so many of their generals." Now that the warring lords do not understand this to be unmagnanimous and unrighteous and neighbouring lords do not understand this to be unmagnanimous and unrighteous, therefore attacks and assaults go on generation after generation without end.

What do I mean when I say people do not understand things of importance but understand trifles? Supposing someone entered the orchard and garden of another and took the other's peaches and prunes, melon and ginger, he will be punished by the superior when caught and condemned by the public when heard of. Why? Because he did not share the toil but takes the fruit and appropriates what is not his. How much more is this true with him who jumps over another's fence and maltreats the children of the other; of him who digs into another's storehouse and carries away the other's gold, jade, silk and cloth; of him who breaks into another's fold and steals the other's oxen and horses; and of him who kills an innocent person? In the government of the lords of today all—from the one who kills an innocent person to the one who jumps over another's fence and maltreats the other's children, who digs into another's warehouse and carries away his gold, jade, silk and cloth, who breaks into another's fold and steals his oxen and horses, and who enters another's orchard and garden and takes his peaches and prunes, melons and ginger, all these are punished quite the same as they would be even in the government of Yao, Shun, Yu, T'ang, Wen and Wu. Now the lords and chiefs in the world all attack and absorb others. This is a thousand and ten thousand times worse than killing one innocent individual, a thousand and ten thousand times worse than jumping over another's fence and maltreating his children or digging into another's storehouse and carrying away his gold, jade, silk and cloth, a thousand and ten thousand times worse than breaking into another's fold and stealing his oxen and horses, or entering another's orchard and garden

and taking his peaches and prunes, melons and ginger. Yet, they claim it to be righteous. . . .

## ANTI-CONFUCIANISM (II)

### (*Chapter 39*)

Once, Confucius was in straits between Ts'ai and Ch'en having only vegetable soup without even rice to eat. After ten days of this, Tse Lu cooked a pig for them. Confucius did not inquire whence the meat came, and ate. Tse Lu robbed some one of his garment and exchanged it for wine. Confucius did not inquire whence the wine came, and drank. But when Lord Ai received Confucius, Confucius would not sit on a mat that was not placed straight and would not eat meat that was not cut properly. Tse Lu went to him and asked: "Why the reverse to what you did on the borders of Ch'en and Ts'ai?" Confucius answered: "Come, let me tell you. Then, our goal was to keep alive. Now our goal is to behave righteously." Now when hunger-stricken he was not scrupulous about the means of keeping alive, and when satiated he acted hypocritically to appear refined. What foolery, perversion, villainy, and pretension can be greater than this! . . .

## KENG CHU <sup>18</sup>

### (*Chapter 46*)

Wu Matse said to Motse: "Though you love universally the world cannot be said to be benefited; though I do not love (universally) the world cannot be said to be injured. Since neither of us has accomplished anything, what makes you then praise yourself and blame me?" Motse answered: Suppose a conflagration is on. One person is fetching water to extinguish it, and another is holding some fuel to reinforce it. Neither of them has yet accomplished anything, but which one do you value? Wu Matse answered that he approved of the intention of the person who fetches water and disapproved of the intention of the person who holds fuel. Motse said: (In the same manner) do I approve of my intention and disapprove of yours.

Wu Matse said to Motse: "For all the righteousness that you do, men do not help you and ghosts do not bless you. Yet you keep on doing it. You must be demented." Motse said: Suppose you have here two employees. One of them works when he sees you but will not work

<sup>18</sup> Name of one of the many disciples of Motse.

when he does not see you. The other one works whether he sees you or not. Which of the two would you value? Wu Matse said that he would value him that worked whether he saw him or not. Motse then said: Then you are valuing him who is demented.

A pupil of Tse Hsia asked Motse whether there could be any struggle among the superior men. Motse said: The superior men do not struggle. The pupil of Tse Hsia said: "There is struggle even among the dogs and hogs, how can there be no struggle among men?" Motse said: "What a shame! T'ang and Wu are praised with words; but dogs and hogs are brought into comparison in conduct. What a shame!"

# THE MIDDLE WAY



# The Aphorisms of Confucius

## INTRODUCTION

ONE OF THE MOST CURIOUS FACTS of world history is that three of the world's greatest and most influential thinkers were born within two decades of each other. Laotse was probably born in 570 B.C., Buddha in 563, and Confucius in 551. The dates of Laotse's life are highly uncertain, but many records of the immediately following centuries, including the *Shiki*, contain various stories of Confucius going to Laotse as an older man for advice. Anyway, it is certain that Buddha was older than Confucius only by twelve years.

It seems destined that Confucius will be known to the West chiefly through his aphorisms, running very close to platitudes. What must not be forgotten is that Confucianism was primarily an historical school, that as Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng says, all the Confucian Classics are history, and that that body of historical learning which provides the ideal and the background for his social teachings can hardly interest the West today. It had a very definite and well-defined system of moral and social philosophy, and I have tried elsewhere <sup>1</sup> to indicate what that system is. To the Chinese, that system of moral and social order, based on history, is contained in the one word *li*, which has such a broad meaning that it is untranslatable. In the narrowest sense, it means "rituals," "propriety," and just "good manners"; in an historical sense, it means the rationalized system of feudal order; in a philosophic sense, it means an ideal social order with "everything in its place"; and in a personal sense, it means a pious, religious state of mind, very near to the word "faith," which means to me a valid, unified body of beliefs implicitly accepted, concerning God and nature and man's place in the universe, as distinguished from the

<sup>1</sup> See my long introduction to *The Wisdom of Confucius* (Modern Library).

knowledge of externals or accidentals. It is this valid, unified body of beliefs implicitly accepted, concerning God and nature and man's place in the universe which the modern world lacks, and it is this lack which cuts the modern world adrift. Among the Chinese scholars, Confucianism is known as the "religion of *li*," the nearest translation for which would be "religion of moral order." It subjects the political order to the moral social order, making the latter the basis of the former, to the extent that it disbelieves in a merely political solution and can be identified with ideal anarchism. (See the selections on "Government.") Any full exposition of the Confucian system of ideas is out of the question here, and readers are referred to *The Wisdom of Confucius*, where both a *Life of Confucius* and his longer discourses are available.

Anyway, Confucius said of himself, "I transmit, and do not create." The fact that some modern Chinese scholars have charged Confucius with forging all the Chinese classics may be cited to show how closely tied up with historical learning the whole Confucian tradition is. From Motse, we learn that a half century after Confucius died, the Confucian scholars wore a special cap and "talked an ancient language." Chuangtse constantly maligned the Confucianists and Confucius himself for talking about Yao and Shun, the sage emperors who were 1,700 years old in Confucius' days. Confucius had a passion for historical research and was the greatest editor of ancient books of his days. But from this body of historical learning, he discerned and established a clear and definite system of social and moral philosophy, and with a hard, common sense, pronounced certain Johnsonian dicta on questions of moral conduct.

It is these moral aphorisms and pronouncements, gathered together in the *Analects*, like Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* without rhyme or order, which the Chinese regard as the essence of Confucian teachings. There they stand, so deep in wisdom and so mellow in tone, a tribute to the nation which worships them. Like mellow old masters, and unlike magazine covers, these sayings of the *Analects* are for the connoisseurs, i.e., for the moral connoisseurs. The gentleness of touch, the softness of tone, the skill coming from mastery are best appreciated by those who have thought deeply about human problems. And like looking at an old master, one person will admire certain details and aspects, and another will admire others. For 2,500 years, they have always exasperated the young inquiring mind, looking for exciting truths and brilliant intellectual sorties, and always won over that mind when it grows older and matures. This accounts for its classic, immortal influence on generations of men.

This idea is further developed in the introduction to "The Golden



Mean." This is the same as the Aristotelean Golden Mean, a rather sad discovery for ardent students of moral conduct. It is the discovery that the gentleman can do nothing exciting or out of the way to distinguish himself except by his indistinguishability from other gentlemen. If courage is but the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice, courage is somewhat nondescript and can hardly be sensational. If the good management of money is but the mean between extravagance and being a miser, neither can that staid, sensible keeping of family accounts have anything heroic about it, or reach psychopathic proportions to provide delightful material for the "realist" writers. If therefore we must be gentlemen, we'll have to be contented with just being gentlemen. But in this plebeianism, there is great content. Plebeianism satisfies.

In these selections translated by myself, I have classified them and given headings of my own, and made an arrangement differing from that in the *Analects*. I have also added some selections from the *Liki* to make certain points clearer. A few minor revisions have been made from the text in "*Wisdom of Confucius*." For further comments on the nature of the *Analects* and the method of studying it, see also the Introduction to these *Aphorisms* in that text.

# The Aphorisms of Confucius

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

## I. DESCRIPTION OF CONFUCIUS BY HIMSELF AND OTHERS

DUKE YEH (OF CH'U) asked Tselu about Confucius, and Tselu did not make a reply. Confucius said, "Why didn't you tell him that I am a person who forgets to eat when he is enthusiastic about something, forgets all his worries when he is happy, and is not aware that old age is coming on?"

Tselu was stopping for the night at the Stone Gate and the gate-keeper asked him, "Where are you from?" "I'm from Confucius," replied Tselu. "Oh, is he the fellow who knows that a thing can't be done and still wants to do it?"

Weisheng Mou said to Confucius, "Why are you so self-important and constantly rushing about? Don't you talk a little bit too much?" "It isn't that I want to talk. It's because I hate (the present moral chaos)."

Confucius said, "At fifteen I began to be seriously interested in study. At thirty I had formed my character. At forty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the will of heaven. At sixty nothing that I heard disturbed me.<sup>1</sup> At seventy I could let my thought wander without trespassing the moral law."

Yen Huei and Tselu were sitting together with Confucius, and Confucius said, "Why don't you each tell me your ambitions in life?" Tselu replied, "It is my ambition in life to go about with a horse and carriage and a light fur coat and share them with my good friends until they are all worn out without any regret." Yen Huei said, "It is my ambition

<sup>1</sup> Here is an example of the great responsibility and room for conjecture on the part of a translator of ancient texts. The original text merely consists of two words, "Ears accord."

never to show off and never to brag about myself." Then Tselu said, "May I hear what is your ambition?" And Confucius replied, "It is my ambition that the old people should be able to live in peace, all friends should be loyal and all young people should love their elders."

There were the famous recluses, Poyi, Shuch'i, Yuchung, Yiyi, Chuchang, Liuhsia Huei and Shaolien. Confucius said, "Not to compromise with their own ideals and not to be disgraced—these were Poyi and Shuch'i." He said of Liuhsia Huei and Shaolien that they compromised with their ideals and were disgraced, but that they managed to maintain a standard in their words and their conduct. He said of Yuchung and Yiyi that they escaped from society and were unconventional or untrammelled in their speech, and that they were able to live a clean private life and to adjust themselves according to the principle of expediency in times of chaos. "I am different from these people; I decide according to the circumstances of the time, and act accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

A great official asked Tsekung, "Is the Master a Sage? Why is it that he is so many-sided?" Tsekung replied, "Heaven has sent him to become a Sage, and he is many-sided, to boot." When Confucius heard this he said, "Perhaps this great official knows me well. I was a poor man's son and can therefore do many things that belong to a common man. Does a gentleman know all these things? No, he doesn't." Tsechang said, "Confucius said, 'I did not enter the government, that was how I had time for learning the arts.'"

Confucius said, "There is pleasure in lying pillowed against a bent arm after a meal of simple vegetables with a drink of water. On the other hand, to enjoy wealth and power without coming by it through the right means is to me like so many floating clouds."

Confucius said, "There are three things about the superior man that I have not been able to attain. The true man has no worries; the wise man has no perplexities; and the brave man has no fear." Tsekung said, "But, Master, you are exactly describing yourself."

Confucius said, "In the study of literature, I am probably as good as anyone, but personally to live the life of the superior man, I don't think I have succeeded."

Confucius said, "As to being a Sage and a true man, I am not so presumptuous. I will admit, however, that I have unceasingly tried to do my best and to teach other people."

<sup>2</sup>Literally, in five words, "No *may*, no *may not*." Later Mencius fully commented upon this, saying that Confucius was a great flexible character, acting according to the requirements of the occasion. He could be an official if necessary, and he could refuse to be an official if necessary. In contrast with the other recluses mentioned, there was a positive urge in his character, as well as a philosophic resignation.

Confucius said, "Do you think I know a great deal? I don't. There was an uneducated man who asked me about something, and I couldn't say a word in reply. I merely discussed the two sides of the question and was at my wit's end."

Confucius said, "In every hamlet of ten families, there are always some people as honest and straight as myself, but none who is so devoted to study."

Confucius said, "I may perhaps compare myself to my old friend Laop'eng. I merely try to describe (or carry on) the ancient tradition, but not to create something new. I only want to get at the truth and am in love with ancient studies."

Confucius said, "To silently appreciate a truth, to learn continually and to teach other people unceasingly—that is just natural with me."

"The things that trouble or concern me are the following: lest I should neglect to improve my character, lest I should neglect my studies, and lest I should fail to move forward when I see the right course, or fail to correct myself when I see my mistake."

Confucius said, "I'm not born a wise man. I'm merely one in love with ancient studies and work very hard to learn them."

Confucius said, "Ah Sze, do you suppose that I merely learned a great deal and tried to remember it all?" "Yes, isn't that what you do?" "No," said Confucius, "I have a system or a central thread that runs through it all."

Confucius said, "There are some people who do not understand a subject, but go ahead and invent things out of their own head. I am not like those people. One can come to be a wise man by hearing a great deal and following the good, and by seeing a great deal and remembering it."

Confucius said, "Sometimes I have gone the whole day without food and a whole night without sleep, occupied in thinking and unable to arrive at any results. So I decided to study again."

Confucius said, "Whenever walking in a company of three, I can always find my teacher among them (or one who has something to teach me). I select a good person and follow his example, or I see a bad person and avoid being like him myself."

Confucius said, "I won't teach a man who is not anxious to learn, and will not explain to one who is not trying to make things clear to himself. And if I explain one-fourth and the man doesn't go back and reflect and think out the implications in the remaining three-fourths for himself, I won't bother to teach him again."

Confucius said, "There was never yet a person who came to me with

the present of dried meat (equivalent of tuition) that I have refused to teach something."

The young men of a certain village, Hu, were given to mischief, and one day some young people from that village came to see Confucius, and the disciples were surprised that Confucius saw them. Confucius said, "Don't be too hard on people. What concerns me is how they come, and not what they do when they go away. When a man approaches me with pure intentions, I respect his pure intentions, although I cannot guarantee what he does afterwards."

Confucius was in difficulties at K'uang and he said, "Since King Wen died, is not the tradition of King Wen in my keeping or possession? If it be the will of Heaven that this moral tradition should be lost, posterity shall never again share in the knowledge of this tradition. But if it be the will of Heaven that this tradition shall not be lost, what can the people of K'uang do to me?"

Confucius said, "Heaven has endowed me with a moral destiny (or mission). What can Huan T'uei (a military officer who was driving him away) do to me?"<sup>3</sup>

Confucius said, "Give me a few more years to take up the study of the *Book of Changes* at the age of fifty, then I hope I shall be able to be free from making serious mistakes (or errors of judgment)."

These were the things Confucius often talked about: Poetry, history, and the performance of ceremonies—all these were what he often talked about.

Confucius seldom talked about profit or destiny or true manhood.<sup>4</sup>

Confucius did not talk about monsters, physical exploits, unruly conduct and the heavenly spirits.

Confucius taught four things: Literature, personal conduct, being one's true self and honesty in social relationships.

Confucius fished with a fishing rod, but would not use a net. While shooting he would not shoot a bird at rest.<sup>5</sup>

Confucius denounced or tried to avoid completely four things: arbitrariness of opinion, dogmatism, narrowmindedness and egotism.

Confucius was gentle but dignified, austere yet not harsh, polite and completely at ease.

Yen Huei heaved a sigh and said, "You look up to it and it seems so high. You try to drill through it and it seems so hard. You seem to see

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II, Section 4, in *The Wisdom of Confucius* for fuller details.

<sup>4</sup> There is no other topic which Confucius and his disciples more constantly talked about than "true manhood." See below Section VI. This is therefore a palpable falsehood, unless it means that Confucius refused to admit that many persons whom his disciples admired could be called "true men."

<sup>5</sup> Both being unfair.

it in front of you, and all of a sudden it appears behind you. The Master is very good at gently leading a man along and teaching him. He taught me to broaden myself by the reading of literature and then to control myself by the observance of proper conduct. I just felt being carried along, but after I have done my very best, or developed what was in me, there still remains something austere standing apart, uncatchable. Do what I could to reach his position, I can't find the way."

Shusun Wushu said to the officials at court, "Tsekung is a better man than Confucius." Tsefu Chingpo told this to Tsekung, and Tsekung said, "It is like the matter of housewalls. My housewall comes up only to the shoulder, and the people outside are therefore able to see my beautiful house, whereas the wall of Confucius is twenty or thirty feet high, and unless you go right inside, you do not see the beauty of its halls and the grandeur of its furniture. But there are very few people who can penetrate inside that household. What Shusun says is therefore perfectly easy to understand."

Again Shusun Wushu tried to belittle the greatness of Confucius, and Tsekung said, "There's no use trying. Confucius cannot be belittled. Other great men are like mounds or hillocks which you can climb up, but Confucius is like the moon and the sun, which you can never reach. A man can shut his eyes to the sun and the moon, but what harm can it do to the sun and the moon? You are just trying to do the impossible."

## II. THE EMOTIONAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE OF CONFUCIUS

When Yen Hwei died, Confucius wept bitterly and his followers said, "You are all shaken up." Confucius said, "Am I all shaken up? But if I don't feel all shaken up at the death of this person, for whom else shall I ever feel shaken up?"

Confucius never ate his fill in the company of people in mourning. If he wept on that day, then he did not sing.

What Confucius took very seriously were: The ceremonial bath before religious worship, war, and sickness.

Someone asked Confucius about the meaning of the Grand Sacrifice to the Imperial Ancestors, and Confucius said, "I don't know. One who knows the meaning of the Grand Sacrifice would be able to rule the world as easily as pointing a finger at the palm."

When Confucius offered sacrifice to his ancestors, he felt as if his ancestors were present bodily, and when he offered sacrifice to the other gods, he felt as if the gods were present bodily. Confucius said, "If I

don't offer sacrifice by being personally present, it is as if I didn't sacrifice at all."

Wangsun Chia asked, "Why do people say that it is better to get on good terms with the kitchen god than with the god of the south-western corner of the house?" Confucius replied, "Nonsense, if you have committed sins against Heaven, you haven't got a god to pray to."<sup>6</sup>

Tsekung wanted to do away with the ceremony of sacrificing the lamb in winter. Confucius said, "Ah Sze, you love the lamb, but I love the institution."

Confucius said, "Respect the heavenly and earthly spirits and keep them at a distance."

Confucius said, "My, how old I have grown! For a long time I have not dreamed of Duke Chou again."<sup>7</sup>

Confucius heard the music of Hsiao in Ch'i, and for three months he forgot the taste of meat, saying, "I never thought that music could be so beautiful." When Confucius was singing with some other men and liked the song, he always asked for an *encore* and then would join in the chorus.

Confucius said, "Wake yourself up with poetry, establish your character in *li* and complete your education in music."

Confucius said, "Since my return to Lu from Wei, I have been able to classify the different kinds of music, and the *ya* and the *sung* are restored to their proper place."

Yen Huei asked about running a government. Confucius replied, "Use the calendar of Hsia Dynasty (the Hsia year begins with "January," or about February in the solar calendar, while the Chou year begins with "November"), adopt the (heavy and strong and comparatively unadorned wooden) carriages of the Shang Dynasty, and use the imperial crown of the Chou Dynasty. For music, adopt the dance of *Hsiao*. Suppress the music of Cheng and keep away the petty flatterers. The music of Cheng is lascivious, and the petty flatterers are dangerous."

(Tselu was playing the *seh*, and) Confucius said, "How dare Ah Yu play such atrocious music in my house!" The disciples then began to look down upon Tselu and Confucius said, "Ah Yu has entered the hall, but he has not entered the inner room."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> These gods in modern China are supposed to intercede for human beings before Heaven.

<sup>7</sup> Duke Chou was the symbol of the moral ruler and founder of the governmental system of the Chou Dynasty which Confucius was trying to restore.

<sup>8</sup> The orthodox interpretation is that Tselu had made some progress in learning the teachings of Confucius, but had not mastered them yet. I am inclined to think that Confucius meant that Tselu was playing only in the outside hall and not in the inner chamber, and that therefore it was not so unforgivable after all.

Confucius would not use navy blue or scarlet for the binding and collar of his dress. He would not have red or purple pyjamas. In summer he would wear underclothes beneath the thin (transparent) coarse or fine linen gown. He would match a lamb coat with a black material; match a coat of white fawn with white material, and match a fox coat with brown (or yellow) material. He always wore a nightgown longer than his body by half. At home he wore a long-haired fox coat. Except during mourning, he wore all sorts of pendants (on his girdle).

For him rice could never be white enough and mince meat could never be chopped fine enough. When the food was mushy or the flavour had deteriorated, or when the fish had become bad or the meat was tainted, he would not eat. When its colour had changed, he would not eat. When the smell was bad, he would not eat. When it was not cooked right, he would not eat. When food was not in season, he would not eat. When the meat was not cut properly, he would not eat. When a food was not served with its proper sauce, he would not eat. Although there was a lot of meat on the table, he would not take it out of proportion with his rice; as for wine, he drank without any set limit, but would stop before getting drunk. Wine or shredded meat bought from the shops he would not eat. A meal without ginger on the table, he would not eat. He did not over-eat.

During thunderstorms his face always changed colour.

### III. THE CONVERSATIONAL STYLE

Tselu, Tseng Hsi, Jan Ch'iu and Kunghsi Hua were sitting together one day and Confucius said, "Do not think that I am a little bit older than you and therefore am assuming airs. You often say among yourselves that people don't know you. Suppose someone should know you, I should like to know how you would appear to that person." Tselu immediately replied, "I should like to rule over a country with a thousand carriages, situated between two powerful neighbours, involved in war and suffering from famine. I should like to take charge of such a country and in three years, the nation will become strong and orderly." Confucius smiled at this remark and said, "How about you, Ah Ch'iu?" Jan Ch'iu replied, "Let me have a country sixty or seventy *li* square or perhaps only fifty or sixty *li* square. Put it in my charge, and in three years the people will have enough to eat, but as for teaching them moral order and music, I shall leave it to the superior man." (Turning to Kunghsi Hua) Confucius said, "How about you, Ah Ch'ih?" Kunghsi Hua replied, "Not that I say I can do it, but I'm willing to learn this. At the ceremonies of religious worship and at the conference of the



inces, I should like to wear the ceremonial cap and gown and be a minor official assisting at the ceremony.” “How about you, Ah Tien?” The latter (Tseng Hsi) was just playing on the *seh*, and with a bang left the instrument and arose to speak. “My ambition is different from yours.” “It doesn’t matter,” said Confucius, “we are just trying to find it what each would like to do.” Then he replied, “In late spring, when a new spring dress is made, I would like to go with five or six grown-ups and six or seven children to bathe in the River Yi, and after the bath go to enjoy the breeze in the Wuyu woods, and then sing on our way home.” Confucius heaved a deep sigh and said, “You are the man after my own heart.”

Confucius said, “Do you think that I have hidden anything from the two or three of you? No, I have hidden nothing from you. There is nothing that I do that I don’t share with the two or three of you. That I.”

Confucius went to the city of Wu (where his disciple Tseyu had been made the magistrate), and heard the people singing to the accompaniment of string instruments. Confucius grinned and said to Tseyu, “You’re trying to kill a chicken with a big cleaver for killing a cow.” “But I heard from you,” replied Tseyu, “that when the superior man had learned culture, he became kind to people, and when the common people learned culture, they would become well-disciplined.” Confucius turned to the other disciples and said, “You fellows, what he says is right. I was only pulling his leg.”

Some people of Tahsiang said, “Great indeed is Confucius! He knows about everything and is an expert at nothing.” When Confucius heard this, he said, “Now what am I going to specialize in? Shall I specialize in archery, or in driving a carriage?”

The Secretary of Justice of Ch’en asked Confucius if Duke Chao of Wu understood propriety (or *li*) and Confucius replied that he did. After Confucius had left, the Secretary asked Wuma Ch’i to come in and said to him, “Is a superior man partial to his own country? I heard that a superior man should not be partial. Duke Chao married a princess of Wu, who was of the same family name, and called her Mengtse of Wu. Now if that man understands propriety, who doesn’t?” Later on Wuma Ch’i told this to Confucius, and Confucius said, “How lucky I am! Whenever I make a mistake, people are sure to discover it.”

Tsekung said, “Here is a beautiful piece of jade. Shall it be kept in a basket? Shall it be offered for a sale at a good price?” Confucius remarked, “Sell it! Sell it! I’m the one waiting for a good price for sale!”

Someone asked about Tsch’an (a good minister of Cheng) and Confucius said, “He is a kind man.” The man then asked about Prince

Tseshi (of Ch'u), and Confucius said, "Oh, that fellow! oh, that fellow!"

Confucius asked Kungming Chia about Kungshu Wentse, "Is it true that your Majesty doesn't talk, doesn't laugh and doesn't take goods from the people?" Kungming Chia replied, "That is an exaggerated story. My Master talks only when he should talk and people are not bored with his talk. He laughs only when he is happy, and people are not bored with his laughter. And he takes goods from the people only when it is right to do so, and people do not mind his taking their goods." Confucius said, "Really! Is that so?"

Tsekung loved to criticize people, and Confucius said, "Ah Sze, you're clever, aren't you? I have no time for such things."

Confucius said, "I greatly admire a fellow who goes about the whole day with a well-fed stomach and a vacuous mind. How can one ever do it? I would rather that he play chess, which would seem to me to be better.

"I have seen people who gather together the whole day and never talk of anything serious among themselves, and who love to play little clever tricks. Marvellous, how can they ever do it!"

Confucius said, "I am going to remain quiet!" Tsekung remarked, "If you remain quiet, how can we ever learn anything to teach to the others?" And Confucius said, "Does Heaven talk? The four seasons go their way in succession and the different things are produced. Does Heaven talk?"

Confucius said, "I have sometimes talked with Huei for a whole day and he just sits still there like a fool. But then he goes into his own room and thinks about what I have said and is able to think out some ideas of his own. He is not a fool."

#### IV. THE JOHNSONIAN TOUCH

Confucius said, "By looking at a man's faults, you know the man's character." <sup>9</sup>

Tsekung asked Confucius, "What kind of a person do you think can be properly called a scholar?" Confucius replied, "A person who shows

<sup>9</sup> *Liki*, Chapter XXXII, gives a fuller quotation, as follows: "Confucius said, 'There are three kinds of true manhood. There are some who show the same behaviour as the true man but proceed from different motives. So those who show the same behaviour as the true man are not necessarily true men. Some have the same faults as the true men, and these you can be sure are the true men. The true men are happy and natural in their true manhood; the wise men choose the behaviour of true manhood because it pays; and those who are afraid to get in jail take the course of true manhood much against their will. . . .' This is also an example of the way in which certain excellent sayings of Confucius are incorporated in the *Analects* without their contexts. The above saying itself, so much like Sainte-Beuve's, seems to point the way to a truer conception of Confucius' character by examining Confucius' foibles.

a sense of honour in his personal conduct and who can be relied upon to carry out a diplomatic mission in a foreign country with competence and dignity can be properly called a scholar." "What kind of a person would come next?" "One who is known to be a good son in his family and has a reputation for humility and respect in a village." "What kind of a person would come next after that?" "A person who is extremely careful of his conduct and speech and always keeps his word. That is a priggish, inferior type of person, but still he can rank below the above two types." "What do you think of the officials to-day?" "Oh!" said Confucius, "those rice-bags! They don't count at all."

Confucius was once seriously ill, and Tselu asked his disciples to serve as stewards (for his funeral to emulate the style of official families). When Confucius got a little better, he remarked, "The scoundrel! He has gone on preparing to do these things behind my back. I have no stewards in my house and he wanted to pretend that I had. Whom can I deceive? Can I deceive God?"

Confucius saw Queen Nancia and Tselu was displeased. Confucius swore an oath, "If I had said or done anything wrong during the interview, may Heaven strike me! May Heaven strike me!"

Tsai Yu slept in the daytime and Confucius remarked, "There is no use trying to carve on a piece of rotten wood, or to whitewash a wall made of earth from a dunghill. Why should I bother to scold him?" Confucius said, "At first when I heard a man talk, I expected his conduct to come up to what he said. But now when I hear a man talk, I reserve my judgment until I see how he acts. I have learned this lesson from Tsai Yu."

(*Confucius hates a bad pun.*) Duke Ai asked about the customs of the worship of the Earth, and Tsai Yu replied, "The Hsias planted pine trees on the altar, the Shangs used cypresses, and the Chous used chestnuts, in order to make the people nuts." (Literally "give the people the creeps," a pun on the Chinese word *li*.) When Confucius heard this, he said, "Oh, better forget your history! Let what has come, come! Don't try to remedy the past!"

Ju Pei wanted to see Confucius and Confucius declined by saying that he was sick. When the man was just outside the door, Confucius took a string instrument, the *seh*, and sang, in order to let him hear it (and know that he was not sick after all).

Yang Ho wanted to see Confucius, and Confucius would not see him. Yang then presented Confucius with a leg of pork, and Confucius took care to find out when he would not be at home and then went to pay his return call, but met him on the way. Yang Ho said to Confucius, "Come, I want to talk to you!" And he said, "Can you call a man kind

who possesses the knowledge to put the country in order, but allows it to go to the dogs?" "Of course not," said Confucius. "Can you call a man wise who loves to get into power and yet lets an opportunity pass by when it comes?" "Of course not," said Confucius. "But the time is passing swiftly by," said Yang Ho. Confucius replied (sarcastically), "Yes, sir, I'm going to be an official." (Yang Ho was a powerful but corrupt official in Lu, and Confucius refused to serve under him.)

Baron Ch'eng Ch'en assassinated Duke Chien (in Ch'i), and Confucius took a ceremonial bath and went to see the Duke of Lu and said, "Ch'en Heng has assassinated the Duke, his superior. We must send a punitive expedition." "You speak to the three Barons (of Lu)." Confucius replied, "You know in my capacity as an official, I have to inform you formally of this matter." "You speak to the three Barons," said the Duke again. Confucius then went to speak to the three Barons who disapproved, and Confucius said to them, "You know in the capacity of an official I have to inform you formally of this matter."

Yuan Jang (who was reputed to sing at his mother's death) squatted in Confucius' presence and Confucius said, "As a child, you were impudent; after you are grown up, you have absolutely done nothing; and now in your old age you refuse to die! You blackguard!" And Confucius struck him in the shin with a cane.

Baron K'ang Chi was worried about thieves and burglars in the country and consulted Confucius about it. Confucius replied, "If you yourself don't love money the people will not steal, even though you reward the thieves."

Baron K'ang Chi was richer than Duke Chou and Jan Ch'iu (Confucius' disciple who was his secretary) continued to tax the people in order to enrich the Baron. Confucius said (to his disciples), "He is not my disciple. You fellows may beat the drum and denounce him. You have my permission."

Baron K'ang Chi was going to attack Ch'uanyu and Jan Ch'iu and Tselu came to see Confucius and said, "The Baron is going to send an expedition against Ch'uanyu." Confucius said, "Ah Ch'iu, isn't this your fault? The town of Ch'uanyu was originally designated by the ancient emperors as a fief to maintain the worship of the Tungmeng Hill, and besides it is situated within the boundaries of Lu, and the ruler was directly appointed by the founder of the Dynasty. How can you ever think of sending an expedition to take it over (to enlarge the territory of the Baron)?" "The Baron wants it. We don't," replied Jan Ch'iu. "Ah Ch'iu," said Confucius, "the ancient historian Chou Jen said, 'Do your best according to your official capacity, and if you can't stop it, then you quit.' If a person is approaching danger and you do not

assist him, or if a person is falling down and you do not support him, then what is the use of being an assistant or guide? What you have just said is wrong. When a tiger or a buffalo escapes from the fenced enclosure or when a piece of sacred jade is found broken in its casket, whose fault is it (but that of the keeper?)" "But this Ch'uanyu lies right next to Pi (city of the Baron)," said Jan Ch'iu, "and if we don't take it now, it will remain a constant threat to our defence in the future." Confucius replied, "Ah Ch'iu, a gentleman hates the person who is embarked upon a course for selfish gains and then tries to create all sorts of pretexts. I have heard that a man in charge of a state or a family doesn't worry about there being too few people in it, but about the unequal distribution of wealth, nor does he worry about poverty, but about general dissatisfaction. For when wealth is equally distributed, there is no poverty; when the people are united, you cannot call it a small nation, and when there is no dissatisfaction (or when people have a sense of security), the country is secure. Accordingly, if people in the neighbouring cities do not pay homage to you, you attend to the civil development in your own country to attract them, and when they come, you make it so that they would like to settle down and live in peace. Now you two as secretaries assisting your chief, have not been able to induce people in the neighbouring cities to pay homage and come to you. You see the country of Lu divided against itself without being able to do anything about it, and then you set about thinking of starting wars right inside the country. I'm afraid that what the Baron will have to worry about will not be the city of Ch'uanyu, but trouble right within your doors."

## V. WIT AND WISDOM

Confucius said, "To know what you know and know what you don't know is the characteristic of one who knows."

Confucius said, "A man who does not say to himself, 'What to do? What to do?'—indeed I do not know what to do with such a person!"

Confucius said, "A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake."

Confucius said, "A melon-cup that no longer resembles a melon-cup and people still say, 'A melon-cup! A melon-cup!'"

Confucius said, "It is said, 'It is difficult to be a king, but it is not easy to be a minister, either.'"

Baron Wen Chi said that he always thought three times before he acted. When Confucius heard this, he remarked, "To think twice is quite enough."

Confucius said, "I do not expect to find a saint today. But if I find a gentleman, I shall be quite satisfied."

Confucius said, "A man who has a beautiful soul always has some beautiful things to say, but a man who says beautiful things does not necessarily have a beautiful soul. A true man (or truly great man) will always be found to have courage, but a courageous man will not always be found to have true manhood."

Confucius said, "A man who brags without shame will find great difficulty in living up to his bragging."

Confucius said, "The man who loves truth (or learning) is better than the man who knows it, and the man who finds happiness in it is better than the man who loves it."<sup>10</sup>

Confucius said, "In speaking to a sovereign, one must look out for three things: To talk before you are asked is called 'impulsiveness.' To fail to talk when you are asked is called 'lack of candour.' And to talk without noticing the sovereign's mood is called 'blindness.'"

Confucius said, "When you find a person worthy to talk to and fail to talk to him, you have missed your man. When you find a man unworthy to talk to and you talk to him, you have missed (i.e., wasted) your words. A wise man neither misses his man nor misses his words."

Confucius said, "A gentleman does not praise a man (or put him in office) on the basis of what he says, nor does he deny the truth of what one says because he dislikes the person who says it (if it is good)."

Tsekung asked Confucius, "What would you say if all the people of the village like a person?" "That is not enough," replied Confucius. "What would you say if all the people of a village dislike a person?" "That is not enough," said Confucius. "It is better when the good people of the village like him, and the bad people of the village dislike him."

Confucius said, "The common man often gets in trouble because of his love for the water (literally "gets drowned" in it); the gentleman often gets into trouble because of his love for talking; and the great man often gets into trouble because of his love for the people. All of them get submerged in what they come close to or are familiar with. Water seems so familiar to the people, but easily drowns them because it is a thing that seems so easy to approach and yet is dangerous to get too near to. Talking easily leads one into trouble because when you talk, you use so many words, and it is easy to let them out of your mouth, but difficult to take them back. The people often get one into trouble because they are mean and not open-minded; you can respect them, but you

<sup>10</sup> There is no indication in the text as to whether the reference is to loving truth or loving learning. It uses only the word "it."

must not insult or offend them. Therefore the gentleman must be very careful."

Confucius said, "The people who live extravagantly are apt to be snobbish (or conceited), and the people who live simply are apt to be vulgar. I prefer the vulgar people to the snobs."

Confucius said, "It is easy to be rich and not haughty; it is difficult to be poor and not grumble."

Confucius said, "When a country is in order, it is a shame to be a poor and common man. When a country is in chaos, it is a shame to be rich and an official."

Confucius said, "Can you ever imagine a petty soul serving as a minister of the state? Before he gets his post, he is anxious to get it, and after he has got it, he is anxious about losing it, and if he begins to be anxious about losing it, then there is nothing that he will not do."

Confucius said, "Do not worry about people not knowing you, but strive so that you may be worth knowing."

Confucius said, "A gentleman blames himself, while a common man blames others."

Confucius said, "If a man would be severe toward himself and generous toward others, he would never arouse resentment."

Confucius said, "A man who does not think and plan long ahead will find trouble right by his door."

Confucius said, "Polished speech often confuses our notion of who is good and who is bad. A man who cannot put up with small losses or disadvantages will often spoil a big plan."

Confucius said, "In talking about a thoroughbred, you do not admire his strength, but admire his temper."

Someone said, "What do you think of repaying evil with kindness?" Confucius replied, "Then what are you going to repay kindness with?" "Repay kindness with kindness, but repay evil with justice (or severity)."

Confucius said, "When you repay kindness with kindness, then the people are encouraged to do good. When you repay evil with evil, then people are warned from doing bad."

Confucius said, "To repay evil with kindness is the sign of a generous character. To repay kindness with evil is the sign of a criminal." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "Men are born pretty much alike, but through their habits they gradually grow further and further apart from each other."

Confucius said, "Only the highest and the lowest characters don't change."

Confucius said, "I have seen rice plants that sprout, but do not blossom, and I have seen rice plants that blossom, but don't bear grains."

Confucius said, "Even though a man had the beautiful talent of Duke Chou, but if he were proud and egoistic, he would not be worth looking at."

Confucius said, "If the superior man is not deliberate in his appearance (or conduct), then he is not dignified. Learning prevents one from being narrow-minded. Try to be loyal and faithful as your main principle. Have no friends who are not as good as yourself. When you have mistakes, don't be afraid to correct them."

Confucius said, "When you see a good man, try to emulate his example, and when you see a bad man, search yourself for his faults."

Confucius said, "Well, well! I have never yet seen a person who knows his own faults and accuses himself before himself!"

Confucius said, "Don't criticize other people's faults, criticize your own."

Tsekung said, "What do you think of a person who is not snobbish (or subservient to the great) when he is poor, and not conceited when he is rich?" Confucius replied, "That's fairly good. It would be better if he were happy when he was poor, and had self-discipline when he was rich."

Confucius said, "You can kill the general of an army, but you cannot kill the ambition in a common man."

## VI. HUMANISM AND TRUE MANHOOD

### HUMANISM

Confucius said, "It is man that makes truth great, and not truth that makes man great."

Confucius said, "Truth may not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth."

Tselu asked about the worship of the celestial and earthly spirits. Confucius said, "We don't know yet how to serve men, how can we know about serving the spirits?" "What about death?" was the next question, and Confucius said, "We don't know yet about life, how can we know about death?"

A certain stable was burned down. On returning from the court, Confucius asked, "Was any man hurt?" And he did not ask about the horses.

### THE MEASURE OF MAN IS MAN

Confucius said, "To one who loves to live according to the principles of true manhood without external inducements and who hates all that is



contrary to the principles of true manhood without external threats of punishments, all mankind seems but like one man only. Therefore the superior man discusses all questions of conduct on the basis of himself as the standard, and then sets rules for the common people to follow." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "True manhood requires a great capacity and the road thereto is difficult to reach. You cannot lift it by your hands and you cannot reach it by walking on foot. He who approaches it to a greater degree than others may already be called 'a true man.' Now is it not a difficult thing for a man to try to reach this standard by sheer effort? Therefore, if the gentleman measures men by the standard of the absolute standard of righteousness, then it is difficult to be a real man. But if he measures men by the standard of man, then the better people will have some standard to go by." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "To a man who feels down in his heart that he is happy and natural while acting according to the principles of true manhood, all mankind seems like but one man." (What is true of the feelings of one person will serve as the standard of feelings for all people.) (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Tsekung asked, "If there is a man here who is a benefactor of mankind and can help the masses, would you call him a true man?" "Why, such a person is not only a true man," said Confucius, "he is a Sage. Even the Emperors Yao and Hsun would fall short of such a standard. Now a true man, wishing to establish his own character, also tries to establish the character of others, and wishing to succeed himself, tries also to help others to succeed. To know how to make the approach from one's neighbours (or from the facts of common, everyday life) is the method or formula for achieving true manhood."

Confucius said, "Is the standard of true manhood so far away, after all? When I want true manhood, there it is right by me."

#### THE GOLDEN RULE

Chung Kung asked about true manhood, and Confucius replied, "When the true man appears abroad, he feels as if he were receiving distinguished people, and when ruling over the people, he feels as if he were worshipping God. What he does not want done unto himself, he does not do unto others. And so both in the state and in the home, people are satisfied."

Tsekung said, "What I do not want others to do unto me, I do not want to do unto them." Confucius said, "Ah Sze, you cannot do it."

Confucius said, "Ah Ts'an, there is a central principle that runs through all my teachings." "Yes," said Tsengtse. When Confucius left, the

disciples asked Tsengtse what he meant, and Tsengtse replied, "It is just the principle of reciprocity (or *shu*)."

Tsekung asked, "Is there one single word that can serve as a principle of conduct for life?" Confucius replied, "Perhaps the word 'reciprocity' (*shu*) will do. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you."

#### TRUE MANHOOD

Confucius said, "For a long time it has been difficult to see examples of true men. Everybody errs a little on the side of his weakness. Therefore it is easy to point out the shortcomings of the true man." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "For a long time it has been difficult to find examples of true men. Only the superior man can reach that state. Therefore the superior man does not try to criticize people for what he himself fails in, and he does not put people to shame for what they fail in. . . ." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order (or to attain central harmony), that indeed is the highest human attainment. For a long time people have seldom been capable of it."

Yen Hwei asked about real manhood, and Confucius said, "True manhood consists in realizing your true self and restoring the moral order or discipline (or *li*). If a man can just for one day realize his true self, and restore complete moral discipline, the world will follow him. To be a true man depends on oneself. What has it got to do with others?"

Confucius said, "Humility is near to moral discipline (or *li*); simplicity of character is near to true manhood; and loyalty is near to sincerity of heart. If a man will carefully cultivate these things in his conduct, he may still err a little, but he won't be far from the standard of true manhood. For with humility or a pious attitude, a man seldom commits errors; with sincerity of heart, a man is generally reliable; and with simplicity of character, he is usually generous. You seldom make a mistake when you start off from these points." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "Yen Hwei's heart does not leave the condition of true manhood for as long as three months. The others are able to reach that level only for a month or for a few days."

Someone said, "Would you call a man who has succeeded in avoiding aggressiveness, pride, resentment and greed a true man?" Confucius said, "I would say that he is a very rare person, but I do not know whether he can be called a true man."

Tsechang asked Confucius: "Secretary Tsewen (of Ch'u) was three times made a secretary and didn't seem to show particular satisfaction at his appointment, and three times he was relieved of his office and did not seem to show any disappointment. And when he was handing over the affairs of his office to his successors, he explained everything to the latter. Now what would you say about such a person?" Confucius said, "I would call him a sincere, faithful person." "Would you say that he is a true man?" "I do not know," said Confucius. "How should I call him a true man?" <sup>11</sup>

Someone said that Chung Kung (a disciple of Confucius) was a true man and that he was not a glib talker. Confucius said, "What is the use of being a glib talker? The more you talk to defend yourself, the more the people hate you. I do not know about his being a true man. What is the use of being a glib talker?"

Count Wu Meng asked if Tselu was a true man, and Confucius said, "I do not know." On being asked again, Confucius said, "You can put Yu in charge of a country with a thousand carriages and let him take care of its finance. But I do not know about his being a true man." "How about Ch'iu?" Confucius said, "You can put Ch'iu in charge of a township of a thousand families or make him the steward of a household with a hundred carriages (that is, of a minister), but I do not know about his being a true man." "How about Ch'ih (Kunghsi Hua)?" Confucius said, "You can let Ch'ih stand at court, dressed in his official gown and girdle and let him entertain the guests, but I do not know about his being a true man."

#### FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TRUE MAN

Confucius said, "One who is not a true man cannot long stand poverty, nor can he stand prosperity for long. A true man is happy and natural in living according to the principles of true manhood, but a wise man thinks it is advantageous to do so."

Confucius said, "Only a true man knows how to love people and how to hate people."

Confucius said, "How can the superior man keep up his reputation when he departs from the level of the true man? The superior man never departs from the level of true manhood for the time of a single meal. In his most casual moments, he lives in it, and in the most compromising circumstances, he still lives in it."

Confucius said, "If a man is not a true man, what is the use of rituals? If a man is not a true man, what is the use of music?"

<sup>11</sup> An actual example like this shows how inadequate it is to translate the Chinese word *jen* as "kindness" "benevolence" or "a kind person," or "a benevolent person."

Confucius said, "The wise man has no perplexities, the true man has no sorrow, and the brave man has no fear."

Confucius said, "A true man is very slow to talk." Someone asked, "Can a man who is slow to talk then be called a true man?" Confucius said, "Because it is so difficult for a man to do what he says, of course he would be very slow to talk."

## VII. THE SUPERIOR MAN AND THE INFERIOR MAN

Confucius said, "The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell."

Confucius said, "The superior man loves his soul; the inferior man loves his property. The superior man always remembers how he was punished for his mistakes; the inferior man always remembers what presents he got."

Confucius said, "The superior man is liberal towards others' opinions, but does not completely agree with them; the inferior man completely agrees with others' opinions, but is not liberal toward them."

Confucius said, "The superior man is firm, but does not fight; he mixes easily with others, but does not form cliques."

Confucius said, "The superior man blames himself; the inferior man blames others."

Confucius said, "The superior man is easy to serve, but difficult to please, for he can be pleased by what is right, and he uses men according to their individual abilities. The inferior man is difficult to serve, but easy to please, for you can please him (by catering to his weaknesses) without necessarily being right, and when he comes to using men, he demands perfection."

Confucius said, "You can put a superior man in an important position with large discretionary powers, but you cannot give him a nice little job; you can give an inferior man a nice little job, but you cannot put him in an important position with great discretionary powers."

Confucius said, "The superior man is not one who is good for only one particular kind of position."

Confucius said, "The superior man is broad-minded toward all men and not a partisan; the inferior man is a partisan, but not broad-minded toward all."

Confucius and his followers had to go for days without food in Ch'en, and some of his followers felt ill and were confined to bed. Tselu came to see Confucius in low spirits and asked, "Does the superior man also land in difficulties?" Confucius said, "Yes, the superior man also some-

times finds himself in difficulties, but when an inferior man finds himself in difficulties, he is likely to do anything."

Confucius said, "The superior man attends to the spiritual things and not to his livelihood. Yet let him cultivate a farm, and he will be starved, but if you let him attend to his studies, he will find riches in it. The superior man does not worry about his poverty, but worries about the spiritual things."

Confucius said, "The superior man is always candid and at ease (with himself or others); the inferior man is always worried about something."

Confucius said, "The superior man develops upwards; the inferior man develops downwards."

Confucius said, "The superior man is dignified and at ease, but not proud; the inferior man is proud, but not dignified."

Confucius said, "The superior man keeps to the standard of right, but does not (necessarily) keep his promise."

Szema Niu asked Confucius about being a gentleman, and Confucius replied, "A gentleman has no worry and no fear." "Does having no worry and no fear then constitute a gentleman?" Confucius said, "If he looks within himself and is sure that he has done right, what does he have to fear or worry about?"

Confucius said, "The superior man goes through his life without any one preconceived course of action or any taboo. He merely decides for the moment what is the right thing to do."

Confucius said, "The superior man doesn't insist on good food and good lodging. He is attentive to his duties and careful in his speech, and he finds a great man and follows him as his guide. Such a person may be called a lover of learning."

Confucius said, "A scholar who intends to follow the truth and is ashamed of his poor dress and poor food is not worth talking to."

Confucius said, "A scholar who is in love with living comforts is not worthy to be called a scholar."

Confucius said, "A man who serves his king and three times finds his advice rejected and still does not leave the country, is hanging on to his post for the sake of the salary. Even though he says that it is not the salary that attracts him, I won't believe him." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

Confucius said, "A gentleman is ashamed that his words are better than his deeds."

Confucius said, "A gentleman is careful about three things: In his youth, when his blood is strong, he is careful about sex. When he is grown up, and his blood is full, he is careful about getting into a fight

(or struggle in general). When he is old and his blood is getting thinner, he is careful about money." (A young man loves women; a middle-aged man loves struggle; and an old man loves money.)

### VIII. THE MEAN AS THE IDEAL CHARACTER AND TYPES OF PERSONS THAT CONFUCIUS HATED

#### THE PEOPLE OF THE MEAN

Confucius said, "Since I cannot find people who follow the Mean (or Golden Mean) to teach, I suppose I will have to work with those who are brilliant or erratic (*k'uang*) and those who are a little dull but careful (*chuan*). The brilliant but erratic persons are always ready to go forward (or are too active), and the dull but careful persons always hold themselves back (or are not active enough)."

Confucius said, "The goody-goodies are the thieves of virtue."<sup>12</sup>

Confucius said (when he was wandering in Ch'en and decided to return to his country to devote himself to editing books and teaching), "Let us go home! The scholars of our country are brilliant but erratic, but they are anxious to go forward, and have not lost their original simplicity of character."

Tsekung asked whether Shih (Tsechang) or Shang (Tsehsia) was the better man. Confucius said, "Ah Shih goes a little too far (or is above the normal) and Ah Shang doesn't go far enough (or is a little below the

<sup>12</sup> In the Confucian teachings, there are, therefore, four classes of persons, which were clearly recognized and more fully commented upon by Mencius. According to Mencius, the people who followed the Mean are the ideal human material. Secondly, according to Mencius, since this ideal material cannot be obtained, Confucius preferred to work with the brilliant but erratic; this is the class that Mencius described as "being of an idealistic an expansive nature, always saying, 'The ancient people! The ancient people!' and being free and easy in their ways without trying to conceal their fault." As examples of this class, Mencius quoted a few people who violated Confucian canons of conduct. (According to Chuangtse, they were reputed to sing at their friends' funerals.) Mencius then went on to say that "since Confucius could not get brilliant but erratic people, he would be content to work with those who were anxious to be correct, the *chuan*, who came after the *k'uang* as a class." In describing the last or fourth class, the thieves of virtue, Mencius said that Confucius said, "The kind of people whom I don't mind failing to come into my house or visiting me when passing my door, are the *hsiangyuan* (or goody-goodies). The *hsiangyuan* are the thieves of virtue." Then in answer to a question about this class of people, Mencius described them as follows: "They say, 'Why be idealistic like those people? When their works do not tally with their conduct and their conduct does not tally with their words, they say, 'The ancient people! The ancient people!' Why are they so supercilious toward the world and so cool and detached in their conduct? When a man lives in the present world and acts according to the standard of the present world, and succeeds, it is quite enough!' They are the class of people who are quite contented to secure the approval of society. These are the *hsiangyuan*." *Hsiangyuan* literally means what the country folk call "good men," or "goody-goodies." The questioner then asked Mencius, "Since all the country folk call them 'good men,' and everywhere they go they are called 'good men' (or 'nice people' or 'respectable people'), why did Confucius call them 'thieves of virtue?'" Mencius then

normal).” “Then is Ah Shih a better person?” Confucius said, “To go a little too far is as bad as not going far enough.” <sup>13</sup>

Confucius said to Tsehsia, “You must be a gentleman-scholar and not a petty scholar.”

Confucius said, “When a man has more solid worth than polish, he appears uncouth, and when a man has more polish than solid worth, he appears urbane. The proper combination of solid worth and polish alone makes a gentleman.”

Confucius said, “The earlier generations were primitive or uncouth people in the matter of ritual and music; the later generations are refined (literally “gentlemen”) in the matter of ritual and music. But if I were to choose between the two, I would follow the people of the earlier generations.” <sup>14</sup>

#### TYPES OF PERSONS THAT CONFUCIUS HATED

Confucius said, “The ancient people had three kinds of faults, and nowadays we haven’t even got them. The ancient people who were impulsive were just unconventional in their ways, but today the impulsive people indulge themselves. The ancient people who were correct and smug were the least austere and careful in their conduct, but today the smug people are always condemning other people and are bad-tempered. The ancient lower class were simple and honest souls, but today the lower class are a deceitful lot.”

Tsekung asked, “Does the superior man also have certain things that he hates?” “Yes, there are things that the superior man hates,” said Confucius. “He hates those who like to criticize people or reveal their weaknesses. He hates those who, in the position of inferiors, like to malign or spread rumours about those in authority. He hates those who

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said, “You want to criticize them and they seem so perfect; you want to lampoon them, and they seem so correct; they fall in with the current conventions and thoroughly identify themselves with the ways of the times. In their living, they seem to be so honest and faithful, and in their conduct they seem to be so moral. Everybody likes them and they are quite pleased with themselves. But it is impossible to lead them into the ways of Emperors Yao and Hsun. Therefore Confucius said, ‘The goody-goodies (or *hsiangyuan*, or the so-called “respectable people”) are the thieves of virtue.’” Directly after this description, Mencius quoted what Confucius had said about the things that resemble the real things but are not the real things, and the types of persons that he hated. See below toward the end of this section.

<sup>13</sup> Evidences seem to show that Tsechang was the more brilliant one and more interested in philosophic principles, while Tsehsia, who later became a great teacher specializing in the teaching of the *Book of Songs* after Confucius’ death, was the type of a humdrum, conscientious professor.

<sup>14</sup> A choice between uncouth simplicity and decadent elaborateness and formalism—a very important point, considering the common charge of formalism against Confucianism. This common criticism was certainly justifiable when it was directed against the Confucianists in the centuries after him.

are chivalrous and headstrong but are not restrained by propriety. He hates those who are sure of themselves and are narrow-minded." "But what do you hate, Ah Sze?" "I hate those who like to spy on others and think they are very clever. I hate those who think they are brave when they are merely unruly. And I hate the wily persons who pretend to be honest gentlemen."

Confucius said, "A man who is impulsive and headstrong without having the virtue of simple honesty, who doesn't know a thing and has not enough wit to speak or behave cautiously, or who has no particular ability and withal has not the virtue of honesty or faithfulness—why, there is nothing to be done about such a person."

Confucius said, "I hate things that resemble the real things but are not the real things. I hate cockles because they get mixed up with the corn. I hate the ingratiating fellows, because they get mixed up with the good men. I hate the glib talkers because they confuse us with honest people. I hate the music of Cheng, because it brings confusion into classical music. I hate the purple colour, because it confuses us with the red colour. I hate the goody-goodies because they confuse us with the virtuous people." (Mencius.)

Confucius said, "A man who appears dignified and austere but is all hollow and weak inside seems to me to be like a little petty burglar who slips into the house through a hole at night."

Confucius said, "Women and the inferior people are most difficult to deal with. When you are familiar with them, they become cheeky, and when you ignore them, they resent it."

Confucius said, "I hate the garrulous people."

Confucius said, "A glib talker with an ingratiating appearance is seldom a gentleman."

Confucius said, "The gentleman does not judge a person entirely by his words. Therefore in a cultured world, we have flowery conduct, and in an uncultured world, we have flowery speeches." (*Liki*, Chapter XXXII.)

## IX. GOVERNMENT

### THE MORAL IDEAL OF GOVERNMENT

Confucius said, "Guide the people with governmental measures and control or regulate them by the threat of punishment, and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of honour or shame. Guide the people by virtue and control or regulate them by *li*, and the people will have a sense of honour and respect."



Confucius said, "When the kingdom of Ch'i moves a step forward, it will have reached the culture of the kingdom of Lu, and when the kingdom of Lu moves a step forward, it will have reached the stage of true civilization."

Confucius said, "In presiding over lawsuits, I'm as good as any man. The thing is to aim so that there should be no lawsuits."

Someone asked Confucius, "Why don't you go into the government?" Confucius replied, "Doesn't the *Book of History* speak about the good son? When the sovereign is a good son, and a good brother, and applies the same principles to the government of the nation, that is also what we call government. Why should I go into the government?"

Yutse said, "We seldom find a man who is a good son and a good brother that is disrespectful to authority, and we never find a man who is not disrespectful to authority wanting to start a rebellion."

#### GOVERNMENT BY MORAL EXAMPLE

Confucius said, "A sovereign who governs a nation by virtue is like the North Polar Star, which remains in its place and the other stars revolve around it."

Baron K'ang Ch'i asked Confucius concerning government, and Confucius replied, "Government is merely setting things right. When you yourself lead them by the right example, who dares to go astray?"

Baron K'ang Ch'i asked Confucius concerning government, saying, "If I kill off the bad citizens, and associate with the good citizens, what do you think?" Confucius replied, "What's the need of killing off people on the part of a ruler of a country? If you desire what is good, the people will become good also. The character of the ruler is like wind, and the character of the common people is like grass, and the grass bends in the direction of the wind."

Confucius said, "When the ruler himself does what is right, he will have influence over the people without giving commands, and when the ruler himself does not do what is right, all his commands will be of no avail."

Confucius said, "If a ruler rectifies his own conduct, government is an easy matter, and if he does not rectify his own conduct, how can he rectify others?"

#### FACTORS OF GOVERNMENT

Tsekung asked about government, the Confucius replied: "People must have sufficient to eat; there must be a sufficient army; and there must be confidence of the people in the ruler." "If you are forced to

give up one of these three objectives, what would you go without first?" asked Tsekung. Confucius said, "I would go without the army first." "And if you were forced to go without one of the two remaining factors, what would you rather go without?" asked Tsekung again. "I would rather go without sufficient food for the people. There have always been deaths in every generation since man lived, but a nation cannot exist without confidence in its ruler."

## X. ON EDUCATION, RITUAL AND POETRY

Confucius said, "Education begins with poetry, is strengthened through proper conduct (self-discipline) and consummated through music."

Confucius said, "The gentleman broadens himself by scholarship or learning, and then regulates himself by *li* (proper conduct or moral discipline). Then he will not fall away from the proper principles."

Yutse said, "Among the functions of *li*, the most valuable is that it establishes a sense of harmony. This is the most beautiful heritage of the ancient kings. It is a guiding principle for all things, big and small. If things do not go right, and you are bent only on having social harmony (or peace) without regulating the society by the pattern of *li* (or the principle of social order),<sup>15</sup> still things won't go right."

Confucius said, "We are saying all the time, '*Li! Li!* Does *li* mean merely a collection of jades and silks (in ceremonial use)? We are saying all the time 'Music! Music!' Does music merely mean playing about with drums and bells?"

Tschsia asked (concerning a passage in the *Book of Songs*), "What is the meaning of the passage, 'She has a winning smile, and her eyes are so clear and bright. Her dress is of a coloured design on a plain background'?" Confucius said, "In painting, we must have a plain background." "Does that mean that the ceremonial forms of *li* must be based on a background of simplicity of character?"<sup>16</sup> Confucius said, "Now you have contributed a fresh thought, Ah Shang! You are worthy to discuss the *Book of Songs*."

Lin Fang asked concerning the foundation of *li*, and Confucius replied, "You are asking an important question! In this matter of rituals or ceremony, rather than be extravagant, be simple. In funeral ceremonies, rather than be expertly familiar, it is more important to have the real sentiment of sorrow."

<sup>15</sup> See Chapters VI, VII, VIII, "Discourses on the Social Order," in *Wisdom of Confucius*.

<sup>16</sup> This is the orthodox interpretation, and probably correct. This sentence consists of merely three words in the original: "*Li—behind—is-that-so?*"

Confucius said, "If you have the wisdom to perceive a truth, but have not the manhood to keep to it, you will lose it again, though you have discovered it. If you have the wisdom to perceive a truth, and the true manhood to keep to it, and fail to preserve decorum in your public appearance, you will not gain the people's respect for authority. If you have the wisdom to perceive a truth, the manhood to keep to it, and have decorum of appearance, but fail to be imbued with the spirit of *li* (or social discipline) in your actions or conduct, it is also not satisfactory."

Confucius said, "Ah Sze is worthy to discuss the *Book of Songs* with me. I tell him something, and he comes up with a fresh suggestion."

Confucius said, "One phrase will characterize all the three hundred poems (actually three hundred and five), and that is: Keep the heart right."

Ch'en K'ang asked Poyu (or Li, the name of Confucius' only son, meaning "a carp"), "Is there anything special that you were taught by your father?" Poyu replied, "No. One day he was standing alone and I ran past the court, and he asked me, 'Have you learned poetry?' And I said, 'Not yet.' He said, 'If you don't study poetry, your language will not be polished.' So I went back and studied poetry. Another day he was standing alone, and I went past the court, and he said to me, 'Have you studied the ceremonies?' And I said, 'Not yet.' And he said, 'If you don't study the ceremonies, you have no guide for your conduct.' And I went back and studied the ceremonies. I was taught to study these two things." Ch'en K'ang came away quite pleased and said, "I asked him one question and learned three things. I learned what Confucius said about poetry. I learned what he said about ceremonies. And I learned that the Master taught his own son in exactly the same way as he taught his disciples (was not partial to his son)."

Confucius said, "Reading without thinking gives one a disorderly mind, and thinking without reading makes one flighty (or unbalanced)."

Confucius said, "Isn't it a great pleasure to learn and relearn again?"

Confucius said, "A man who goes over what he has already learned and gains some new understanding from it is worthy to be a teacher."

Confucius said, "That type of scholarship which is bent on remembering things in order to answer people's questions does not qualify one to be a teacher."

Confucius said, "The ancient scholars studied for their own sake; today the scholars study for the sake of others (out of obligations to their teachers, their parents, etc.)."

Confucius said, "Ah Yu, have you heard of the six sayings about the six shortcomings?" "No," said Tselu. "Sit down, then, and I will tell

you. If a man loves kindness, but doesn't love study, his shortcoming will be ignorance. If a man loves wisdom but does not love study, his shortcoming will be having fanciful or unsound ideas. If a man loves honesty and does not love study, his shortcoming will be a tendency to spoil or upset things. If a man loves simplicity but does not love study, his shortcoming will be sheer following of routine. If a man loves courage and does not love study, his shortcoming will be unruliness or violence. If a man loves decision of character and does not love study, his shortcoming will be self-will or headstrong belief in himself."

Confucius said, "Those who are born wise are the highest type of people; those who become wise through learning come next; those who learn by sheer diligence and industry, but with difficulty, come after that. Those who are slow to learn, but still won't learn, are the lowest type of people."

Confucius said, "The young people should be good sons at home, polite and respectful in society; they should be careful in their conduct and faithful, love the people, and associate themselves with the kind people. If after learning all this, they still have energy left, let them read books."

# The Golden Mean of Tsesze

## INTRODUCTION

I THINK it was the late Professor Herbert A. Giles who described the character of Confucius as that of a typical English schoolmaster. Nothing would have pleased Confucius better than this description. Actually, the Chinese gentleman, like the English gentleman, or at least the perfect one, is an indescribable and indefinable nonentity whom you will not recognize if you pass him on the street, just as the perfect English pronunciation is one which betrays no accent of any particular locality. The essence of the English gentleman is the ability to pass into unrecognizability from one's fellow men, and the essence of Confucian culture is the moral effort to aspire to achieve the commonplace. It is by holding to the doctrine of the Golden Mean, or the Middle Way, that commonplaceness can be achieved. Confucius confessed, "There are those who seek for the abstruse and strange and live a singular life in order to leave their names to posterity. This I would never do." He also once drew a sharp distinction between the famous man and the truly great man, and described the "famous" man as one who was "bound to be talked about at home when he was at home, and bound to be talked about abroad when he was abroad." It is this doctrine of the Golden Mean which Confucian scholars hold to be the fundamental philosophy of all human conduct, and is intended to transform the Chinese people into a nation of village schoolmasters.

The Golden Mean represents probably the best philosophical approach to Confucian moral philosophy. In this book are contained such great sayings as the following: "What is God-given is what we call human nature. To fulfil the law of human nature is what we call the moral law. The cultivation of the moral law is what we call culture." "Being true

to oneself is the law of God. To learn to be true to oneself is the law of man." There is in it the great humanistic dictum, "Truth does not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth." There is the important Confucian teaching that the measure of man is man, and that the standard of human goodness is not to be sought in Heaven, but in one's fellow man. There is the further somewhat mystic recognition of the identity of the moral law within and the law of the universe without.

The Golden Mean forms one of the *Four Books* formerly prescribed for study in all elementary schools. It formed originally Chapter XXXI of *Liki*, and like certain chapters of the *Liki*, its authorship is ascribed to Tsesze, the grandson of Confucius and allegedly teacher of Mencius. An examination of the style of the book reveals that probably it consisted originally of two separate parts, one distinguished by its beauty of style and a highly philosophical mind in the author, while the other consists of sundry quotations from Confucius on the Golden Mean, put together without much correlation or order. I have rearranged the text and given sectional headings, the reasons for which are given fully in the Introduction to this piece in *The Wisdom of Confucius* (Modern Library).

For the convenience of serious students who wish to compare the original text, I have inserted in parenthesis at the beginnings of sections the original numbers of the "chapters." The translation is by the late brilliant Ku Hungming, with certain revisions of my own, to correspond more nearly with the original text.

# The Golden Mean of Tsesze

*Translated by Ku Hungming*

## I. THE CENTRAL HARMONY

(I) WHAT IS GOD-GIVEN is what we call human nature. To fulfil the law of our human nature is what we call the moral law. The cultivation of the moral law is what we call culture.

The moral law is a law from whose operation we cannot for one instant in our existence escape. A law from which we may escape is not the moral law. Wherefore it is that the moral man (or the superior man) watches diligently over what his eyes cannot see and is in fear and awe of what his ears cannot hear.

There is nothing more evident than that which cannot be seen by the eyes and nothing more palpable than that which cannot be perceived by the senses. Wherefore the moral man watches diligently over his secret thoughts.

When the passions, such as joy, anger, grief, and pleasure have not awakened, that is our *central* self, or moral being (*chung*). When these passions awaken and each and all attain due measure and degree, that is *harmony*, or the moral order (*ho*). Our central self or moral being is the great basis of existence, and *harmony* or moral order is the universal law in the world.

When our true central self and harmony are realized, the universe then becomes a cosmos and all things attain their full growth and development.

## II. THE GOLDEN MEAN

(II) Confucius remarked: "The life of the moral man is an exemplification of the universal moral order (*chung-yung*, usually translated as "the Mean").<sup>1</sup> The life of the vulgar person, on the other hand, is a contradiction of the universal moral order.

"The moral man's life is an exemplification of the universal order, because he is a moral person who unceasingly cultivates his true self or moral being. The vulgar person's life is a contradiction of the universal order, because he is a vulgar person who in his heart has no regard for, or fear of, the moral law."

(III) Confucius remarked: "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order, that indeed is the highest human attainment. For a long time, people have seldom been capable of it."

(IV) Confucius remarked: "I know now why the moral life is not practised. The wise mistake moral law for something higher than what it really is; and the foolish do not know enough what moral law really is. I know now why the moral law is not understood. The noble natures want to live too high, high above their moral ordinary self; and ignoble natures do not live high enough, i.e., not up to their moral ordinary true self. There is no one who does not eat and drink. But few there are who really know flavour."

(V) Confucius remarked: "There is in the world now really no more social order at all."

(VII) Confucius remarked: "Men all say 'I am wise'; but when driven forward and taken in a net, a trap, or a pitfall, there is not one who knows how to find a way of escape. Men all say, 'I am wise'; but in finding the true central clue and balance in their moral being (i.e., their normal, ordinary, true self), they are not able to keep it for a round month."

(VIII) Confucius remarked of his favourite disciple, Yen Hwei: "Hwei was a man who all his life sought the central clue in his moral being, and when he got hold of one thing that was good, he embraced it with all his might and never lost it again."

(IX) Confucius remarked: "A man may be able to put a country in order, be able to spurn the honours and emoluments of office, be able to trample upon bare, naked weapons; with all that he is still not able to find the central clue in his moral being."

<sup>1</sup> *Chung* means "central," and *yung* means "constant." The whole idea expresses the conception of a norm. It is possible that Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 originally formed a separate book, later amalgamated with the other Sections (1, 7, 8, 9, 10). The styles of the two parts are quite different. This accounts for the abrupt change from *chunggho* (central harmony) in the first section to *chungyung* (Golden Mean) in the second section.



(X) Tselu asked what constituted strength of character.

Confucius said: "Do you mean strength of character of the people of the southern countries or force of character of the people of the northern countries; or do you mean strength of character of your type? To be patient and gentle, ready to teach, returning not evil for evil; that is the strength of character of the people of the southern countries. It is the ideal place for the moral man. To lie under arms and meet death without regret; that is the strength of character of the people of the northern countries. It is the ideal of brave men of your type. Wherefore the man with the true strength of moral character is one who is gentle, yet firm. How unflinching is his strength! When there is moral social order in the country, if he enters public life he does not change from what he was when in retirement. When there is no moral social order in the country, he is content unto death. How unflinching is his strength!"

(XI) Confucius remarked: "There are men who seek for the abstruse and strange and live a singular life in order that they may leave a name to posterity. This is what I never would do. There are again good men who try to live in conformity with the moral law, but who, when they have gone halfway, throw it up. I never could give it up. Lastly, there are truly moral men who unconsciously live a life in entire harmony with the universal moral order and who live unknown to the world and unnoticed of men without any concern. It is only men of holy, divine natures who are capable of this."

### III. MORAL LAW EVERYWHERE

(XII) The moral law is to be found everywhere, and yet it is a secret.

The simple intelligence of ordinary men and women of the people may understand something of the moral law; but in its utmost reaches there is something which even the wisest and holiest of men cannot understand. The ignoble natures of ordinary men and women of the people may be able to carry out the moral law; but in its utmost reaches even the wisest and holiest of men cannot live up to it.

Great as the Universe is, man is yet not always satisfied with it. For there is nothing so great but the mind of the moral men can conceive of something still greater which nothing in the world can hold. There is nothing so small but the mind of the moral man can conceive of something still smaller which nothing in the world can split.

The *Book of Songs* says: "The hawk soars to the heavens above and fishes dive to the depths below." That is to say, there is no place in the highest heavens above nor in the deepest waters below where the moral

law is not to be found. The moral man finds the moral law beginning in the relation between man and woman; but ending in the vast reaches of the universe.

(XVI) Confucius remarked: "The power of spiritual forces in the Universe—how active it is everywhere! Invisible to the eyes, and impalpable to the senses, it is inherent in all things, and nothing can escape its operation."

It is the fact that there are these forces which makes men in all countries fast and purify themselves and with solemnity of dress institute services of sacrifice and religious worship. Like the rush of mighty waters, the presence of unseen Powers is felt; sometimes above us, sometimes around us.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

"The presence of the Spirit:  
It cannot be surmised,  
How may it be ignored!"

Such is the evidence of things invisible that it is impossible to doubt the spiritual nature of man.

#### IV. THE HUMANISTIC STANDARD

(XIII) Confucius said: "Truth does not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth. The *Book of Songs* says: 'In hewing an axe handle, the pattern is not far off.' Thus, when we take an axe handle in our hand to hew another axe handle and glance from one to the other, some still think the pattern is far off. Wherefore the moral man in dealing with men appeals to the common human nature and changes the manner of their lives and nothing more.

"When a man carries out the principles of conscientiousness and reciprocity he is not far from the moral law. What you do not wish others should do unto you, do not do unto them.

"There are four things in the moral life of a man, not one of which I have been able to carry out in my life. To serve my father as I would expect my son to serve me: that I have not been able to do. To serve my sovereign as I would expect a minister under me to serve me: that I have not been able to do. To act towards my elder brothers as I would expect my younger brother to act towards me: that I have not been able to do. To be the first to behave towards friends as I would expect them to behave towards me: that I have not been able to do.

"In the discharge of the ordinary duties of life and in the exercise of care in ordinary conversation, whenever there is shortcoming, never fail to strive for improvement, and when there is much to be said, always say less than what is necessary; words having respect to actions and actions having respect to words. Is it not just this thorough genuineness and absence of pretence which characterizes the moral man?"

(XV) The moral life of man may be likened to travelling to a distant place: one must start from the nearest stage. It may also be likened to ascending a height: one must begin from the lowest step. The *Book of Songs* says:

"When wives and children and their sires are one,  
'Tis like the harp and lute in unison.  
When brothers live in concord and at peace  
The strain of harmony shall never cease.  
The lamp of happy union lights the home,  
And bright days follow when the children come."

Confucius, commenting on the above, remarked: "In such a state of things what more satisfaction can parents have?"

(XIV) The moral man conforms himself to his life circumstances; he does not desire anything outside of his position. Finding himself in a position of wealth and honour, he lives as becomes one living in a position of wealth and honour. Finding himself in a position of poverty and humble circumstances, he lives as becomes one living in a position of poverty and humble circumstances. Finding himself in uncivilized countries, he lives as becomes one living in uncivilized countries. Finding himself in circumstances of danger and difficulty, he acts according to what is required of a man under such circumstances. In one word, the moral man can find himself in no situation in life in which he is not master of himself.

In a high position he does not domineer over his subordinates. In a subordinate position he does not court the favour of his superiors. He puts in order his own personal conduct and seeks nothing from others; hence he has no complaint to make. He complains not against God, nor rails against men.

Thus it is that the moral man lives out the even tenor of his life calmly waiting for the appointment of God, whereas the vulgar person takes to dangerous courses, expecting the uncertain chances of luck.

Confucius remarked: "In the practice of archery we have something resembling the principle in a moral man's life. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his failure within himself."

## V. CERTAIN MODELS

(VI) Confucius remarked: "There was the Emperor Shun. He was perhaps what may be considered a truly great intellect. Shun had a natural curiosity of mind and he loved to inquire into ordinary conversation. He ignored the bad (words?) and broadcast the good. Taking two extreme counsels, he took the mean between them and applied them in dealings with his people. This was the characteristic of Shun's great intellect."

(XVII) Confucius remarked: "The Emperor Shun might perhaps be considered in the highest sense of the word a pious man. In moral qualities he was a saint. In dignity of office he was the ruler of the empire. In wealth all that the wide world contained belonged to him. After his death his spirit was sacrificed to in the ancestral temple, and his children and grandchildren preserved the sacrifice for long generations.

"Thus it is that he who possesses great moral qualities will certainly attain to correspondingly high position, to corresponding great prosperity, to corresponding great name, to corresponding great age.

"For God in giving life to all created things is surely bountiful to them according to their qualities. Hence the tree that is full of life, He fosters and sustains, while that which is ready to fall He cuts off and destroys.

*The Book of Songs* says:

"That great and noble Prince displayed  
The sense of right in all he wrought;  
The spirit of his wisdom swayed  
Peasant and peer; the crowd, the court.

So Heav'n, that crowned his sires, restored  
The countless honours they had known;  
For Heav'n aye keepeth watch and ward,  
The Mandate gave to mount the throne."

It is therefore true that he who possesses exceedingly great moral qualities will certainly receive the divine mandate to the Imperial throne."

(XVIII) Confucius remarked: "The man perhaps who enjoyed the most perfect happiness was the Emperor Wen. For father he had a remarkable man, the Emperor Chi, and for son also a remarkable man, the Emperor Wu. His father laid the foundation of his House and his son carried it on. The Emperor Wu, continuing the great work begun by his ancestor, the great Emperor, his grandfather Chi and his father the Emperor Wen, had only to buckle on his armour and the Empire at once

came to his possession. In dignity of office he was the ruler of the Empire; in wealth all that the wide world contained belonged to him. After his death his spirit was sacrificed to in the ancestral temple, and his children and grandchildren preserved the sacrifice for long generations.

"The Emperor Wu received Heaven's mandate to rule in his old age. His brother, Duke Chou, ascribed the achievement of founding the Imperial House equally to the moral qualities of the Emperors Wen and Wu. He carried the Imperial title up to the Great Emperor (Wen's grandfather) and the Emperor Chi (Wen's father). He sacrificed to all the past reigning Dukes of the House with Imperial honours.

("This rule is now universally observed from the reigning princes and nobles to the gentlemen and common people. In the case where the father is a noble and the son is a simple gentleman, the father, when he dies, is buried with the honours of a noble, but sacrificed to as a simple gentleman. In the case where the father is a simple gentleman and the son a noble, the father, when he dies, is buried as a simple gentleman, but sacrificed to with the honours of a nobleman. The rule for one year of mourning for relatives is binding up to the rank of a noble, but the rule for three years of mourning for parents is binding for all up to the Emperor. In mourning for parents there is only one rule, and no distinction is made between noble and plebeian.")<sup>2</sup>

(XIX) Confucius remarked: "The Emperor Wu and his brother, Duke Chou, were indeed eminently pious men. Now, true filial piety consists in successfully carrying out the unfinished work of our forefathers and transmitting their achievements to posterity."

"In spring and autumn they repaired and put in order the ancestral temple, arranged the sacrificial vessels, exhibited the regalia and heirlooms of the family, and presented the appropriate offerings of the season.

"The principle in the order of precedence in the ceremonies of worship in the ancestral temple is, in the first place, to arrange the members of the family according to descent. Ranks are next considered, in order to give recognition to the principle of social distinction. Services rendered are next considered as a recognition of distinction in moral worth. In the general banquet those below take precedence of those above in pledging the company, in order to show that consideration is shown to the meanest. In conclusion, a separate feast is given to the elders, in order to recognize the principle of seniority according to age.

"To gather in the same places where our fathers before us have gathered; to perform the same ceremonies which they before us have performed; to play the same music which they before us have played;

<sup>2</sup> The foregoing paragraph is part of the original Confucian text. In content, however, it resembles a commentary.

to pay respect to those whom they honoured; to love those who were dear to them—in fact, to serve those now dead as if they were living, and now departed as if they were still with us: this is the highest achievement of true filial piety.

“The performance of sacrifices to Heaven and Earth is meant for the service of God. The performance of ceremonies in the ancestral temple is meant for the worship of ancestors. If one only understood the meaning of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and the significance of the services in ancestral worship in summer and autumn, it would be as easy to govern a nation as to point a finger at the palm.”

## VI. ETHICS AND POLITICS <sup>3</sup>

(XX) Duke Ai (ruler of Lu, Confucius' native state) asked what constituted good government.

Confucius replied: “The principles of good government of the Emperors Wen and Wu are abundantly illustrated in the records preserved. When the men are there, good government will flourish, but when the men are gone, good government decays and becomes extinct. With the right men, the growth of good government is as rapid as the growth of vegetation is in the right soil. Indeed, good government is like a fast-growing plant. The conduct of government, therefore, depends upon the men. The right men are obtained by the ruler's personal character. To cultivate his personal character, the ruler must use the moral law (*tao*). To cultivate the moral law, the ruler must use the moral sense (*jen*, or principles of true manhood).

“The moral sense is the characteristic attribute of man. To feel natural affection for those nearly related to us is the highest expression of the moral sense. The sense of justice (*yi* or propriety) is the recognition of what is right and proper. To honour those who are worthier than ourselves is the highest expression of the sense of justice. The relative degrees of natural affection we ought to feel for those who are nearly related to us and the relative grades of honour we ought to show to those worthier than ourselves: these give rise to the forms and distinctions in social life (*li*, or principles of social order). For unless social inequalities have a true and moral basis (or unless those being ruled feel their proper place with respect to their rulers), government of the people is an impossibility.

“Therefore it is necessary for a man of the governing class to set about regulating his personal conduct and character. In considering how to regulate his personal conduct and character, it is necessary for him to do

<sup>3</sup> This section must have been placed here from other “ancient records.” Confucius had a number of interviews with Duke Ai, some in the “Great Tai” collection.

his duties toward those nearly related to him. In considering how to do his duties toward those nearly related to him, it is necessary for him to understand the nature and organization of human society. In considering the nature and organization of human society it is necessary for him to understand the laws of God.

"The duties of universal obligation are five, and the moral qualities by which they are carried out are three. The duties are those between ruler and subject, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those in the intercourse between friends. These are the five duties of universal obligation. Wisdom, compassion and courage<sup>4</sup>—these are the three universally recognized moral qualities of man. It matters not in what way men come to the exercise of these moral qualities, the result is one and the same.

"Some men are born with the knowledge of these moral qualities; some acquire it as the result of education; some acquire it as the result of hard experience. But when the knowledge is acquired, it comes to one and the same thing. Some exercise these moral qualities naturally and easily; some because they find it advantageous to do so; some with effort and difficulty. But when the achievement is made it comes to one and the same thing:"

Confucius went on to say: "Love of knowledge is akin to wisdom. Strenuous attention to conduct is akin to compassion. Sensitiveness to shame is akin to courage.

"When a man understands the nature and use of these three moral qualities, he will then understand how to put in order his personal conduct and character. When a man understands how to put in order his personal conduct and character, he will understand how to govern men. When a man understands how to govern men, he will then understand how to govern nations and empires.

"For every one called to the government of nations and empires there are nine cardinal directions to be attended to:

1. Cultivating his personal conduct.
2. Honouring worthy men.
3. Cherishing affection for, and doing his duty toward, his kindred.
4. Showing respect to the high ministers of state.
5. Identifying himself with the interests and welfare of the whole body of public officers.
6. Showing himself as a father to the common people.
7. Encouraging the introduction of all useful arts.
8. Showing tenderness to strangers from far countries.
9. Taking interest in the welfare of the princes of the Empire.

<sup>4</sup> Ku translates them as "intelligence, moral character and courage."

“When the ruler pays attention to the cultivation of his personal conduct, there will be respect for the moral law. When the ruler honours worthy men, he will not be deceived (by the crafty officials). When the ruler cherishes affection for his kindred, there will be no disaffection among the members of his family. When the ruler shows respect to the high ministers of state, he will not make mistakes. When the ruler identifies himself with the interests and welfare of the body of public officers, there will be a strong spirit of loyalty among the gentlemen of the country. When the ruler becomes a father to the common people, the mass of the people will exert themselves for the good of the state. When the ruler encourages the introduction of all useful arts, there will be sufficiency of wealth and revenue in the country. When the ruler shows kindness to the strangers from far countries, people from all quarters of the world will flock to the country. When the ruler takes interest in the condition and welfare of the princes of the Empire, he will inspire awe and respect for his authority throughout the whole world.

“By attending to the cleanliness and purity of his person and to the propriety and dignity of his dress, and in every word and act permitting nothing which is contrary to good taste and decency; that is how the ruler cultivates his personal conduct. By banishing all flatterers and keeping away from the society of women, holding in low estimation possession of worldly goods, but valuing moral qualities in men—that is how the ruler gives encouragement to worthy men. By raising them to high places of honour and bestowing ample emoluments for their maintenance; sharing and sympathizing with their tastes and opinions—that is how the ruler inspires love for his person among the members of his family. By extending the powers of their function and allowing them discretion in the employment of their subordinates—that is how the ruler gives encouragement to the high ministers of state. By dealing loyally and punctually with them in all engagements which he makes with them and allowing a liberal scale of pay—that is how the ruler gives encouragement to men in the public service. By strictly limiting the time of their service and making all imposts as light as possible—that is how the ruler gives encouragement to the mass of the people. By ordering daily inspection and monthly examination and rewarding each according to the degree of his workmanship—that is how the ruler gives encouragement to the mass of the people. By ordering daily inspection and monthly examination and rewarding each according to the degree of his workmanship—that is how the ruler encourages the artisan class. By welcoming them when they come and giving them protection when they go, commending what is good in them and making allowance for their ignorance—that is how the ruler shows kindness to strangers from far



countries. By restoring lines of broken succession and reviving subjugated states, putting down anarchy and disorder wherever they are found, and giving support to the weak against the strong, fixing stated times for their attendance and the attendance of their envoys at court, loading them with presents when they leave, while exacting little from them in the way of contribution when they come—that is how the ruler takes interest in the welfare of the princes of the empire.

“For every one who is called to the government of nations and empire, these are the nine cardinal directions to be attended to; and there is only one way by which they can be carried out.

“In all matters success depends on preparation; without preparation there will always be failure. When what is to be said is previously determined, there will be no difficulty in carrying it out. When a line of conduct is previously determined, there will be no occasion for vexation. When general principles are previously determined, there will be no perplexity to know what to do.”

## VII. BEING ONE'S TRUE SELF

“If the people in inferior positions do not have confidence in those above them, government of the people is an impossibility. There is only one way to gain confidence for one's authority: if a man is not trusted by his friends, he will not have confidence in those above him. There is only one way to be trusted by one's friends: if a man is not affectionate toward his parents, he will not be trusted by his friends. There is only one way to be affectionate toward one's parents: if a man, looking into his own heart, is not true to himself, he will not be affectionate toward his parents. There is only one way for a man to be true to himself. If he does not know what is good, a man cannot be true to himself.

“Being true to oneself is the law of God. Try to be true to oneself is the law of man.<sup>5</sup>

“He who is naturally true to himself is one who, without effort, hits upon what is right, and without thinking understands what he wants to know, whose life is easily and naturally in harmony with the moral law. Such a one is what we call a saint or a man of divine nature. He who learns to be his true self is one who finds out what is good and holds fast to it.

“In order to learn to be one's true self, it is necessary to obtain a wide and extensive knowledge of what has been said and done in the world;

<sup>5</sup> This part from the beginning of the section is found in the *Book of Mencius*, Book IV, Part I. The complete interview is found also in “Confucius' Family Records” (*K'ungtse Chia-yu*), without the section that follows immediately.

critically to inquire into it; carefully to ponder over it; clearly to sift it; and earnestly to carry it out.

"It matters not what you learn; but when you once learn a thing, you must never give it up until you have mastered it. It matters not what you inquire into, but when you inquire into a thing, you must never give it up until you have thoroughly understood it. It matters not what you try to think out, but when you once try to think out a thing you must never give it up until you have got what you want. It matters not what you try to sift out, but when you once try to sift out a thing, you must never give it up until you have sifted it out clearly and distinctly. It matters not what you try to carry out, but when you once try to carry out a thing you must never give it up until you have done it thoroughly and well. If another man succeed by one effort, you will use a hundred efforts. If another man succeed by ten efforts, you will use a thousand efforts.

"Let a man really proceed in this manner, and, though dull, he will surely become intelligent; though weak, he will surely become strong."

(XXI) To arrive at understanding from being one's true self is called nature, and to arrive at being one's true self from understanding is called culture. He who is his true self has thereby understanding, and he who has understanding finds thereby his true self.<sup>6</sup>

## VIII. THOSE WHO ARE ABSOLUTE TRUE SELVES

(XXII) Only those who are their absolute true selves in the world can fulfil their own nature; only those who fulfil their own nature can fulfil the nature of others; only those who fulfil the nature of others can fulfil the nature of things; those who fulfil the nature of things are worthy to help Mother Nature in growing and sustaining life; and those who are worthy to help Mother Nature in growing and sustaining life are the equals of Heaven and Earth.

(XXIII) The next in order are those who are able to attain to the apprehension of a particular branch of study. By such studies, they are also able to apprehend the truth. Realization of the true self compels expression; expression becomes evidence; evidence becomes clarity or luminosity of knowledge; clarity or luminosity of knowledge activates; active knowledge becomes power and power becomes a pervading influence. Only those who are absolutely their true selves in this world can have pervading influence.

(XXIV) It is an attribute of the possession of the absolute true self to be able to foreknow. When a nation or family is about to flourish, there

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph constitutes a "chapter" by itself in the Chinese text. The translation of this paragraph and the following two paragraphs is entirely mine, differing from Ku's.

are sure to be lucky omens. When a nation or family is about to perish, there are sure to be signs and prodigies. These things manifest themselves in the instruments of divination and in the agitation of the human body. When happiness or calamity is about to come, it can be known beforehand. When it is good, it can be known beforehand. When it is evil, it can also be known beforehand. Therefore he who has realized his true self is like a celestial spirit.

(XXV) Truth means the fulfilment of our self; and moral law means following the law of our being. Truth is the beginning and end (the substance) of material existence. Without truth there is no material existence. It is for this reason that the moral man values truth.

Truth is not only the fulfilment of our own being; it is that by which things outside of us have an existence. The fulfilment of our being is moral sense. The fulfilment of the nature of things outside of us is intellect. These, moral sense and intellect, are the powers or faculties of our being. They combine the inner or subjective and outer or objective use of the power of the mind. Therefore, with truth, everything done is right.

(XXVI) Thus absolute truth is indestructible. Being indestructible, it is eternal. Being eternal, it is self-existent. Being self-existent, it is infinite. Being infinite, it is vast and deep. Being vast and deep, it is transcendental and intelligent. It is because it is vast and deep that it contains all existence. It is because it is transcendental and intelligent that it embraces all existence. It is because it is infinite and eternal that it fulfils or perfects all existence. In vastness and depth it is like the Earth. In transcendental intelligence it is like Heaven. Infinite and eternal, it is the Infinite itself.

Such being the nature of absolute truth, it manifests itself without being seen; it produces effects without motion; it accomplishes its ends without action.

The principle in the course and operation of nature may be summed up in one word: because it obeys only its own immutable law, the way in which it produces the variety of things is unfathomable.

Nature is vast, deep, high, intelligent, infinite and eternal. The heaven appearing before us is only this bright, shining mass; but in its immeasurable extent, the sun, the moon, stars and constellations are suspended in it, and all things are embraced under it. The Earth, appearing before us, is but a handful of soil; but in all its breadth and depth, it sustains mighty mountains without feeling their weight; rivers and seas dash against it without causing it to leak. The mountain appearing before us is only a mass of rock; but in all the vastness of its size, grass and vegetation grow upon it, birds and beasts dwell on it, and treasures of precious minerals are found in it. The water appearing before us is

but a ladleful of liquid; but in all its unfathomable depths, the largest crustaceans, dragons, fishes, and turtles are produced in them, and all useful products abound in them.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“The ordinance of God,  
How inscrutable it is and goes on for ever.”

That is to say, this is the essence of God. It is again said:

“How excellent it is,  
The moral perfection of King Wen.”

That is to say, this is the essence of the noble character of the Emperor Wen. Moral perfection also never dies.

## IX. EULOGY ON CONFUCIUS

(XXVII) Oh, how great is the divine moral law of the Sage. Overflowing and illimitable, it gives birth and life to all created things and towers high up to the very heavens. How magnificent it is! How imposing the three hundred principles and three thousand rules of conduct! They await the man who can put the system into practice. Hence it is said: Unless there be the highest moral character, the highest moral law cannot be realized.

Wherefore the moral man, while honouring the greatness and power of his moral nature, yet does not neglect inquiry and pursuit of knowledge. While broadening the scope of his knowledge, he yet seeks to exhaust the mystery of the small things. While seeking to attain the highest understanding he yet orders his conduct according to the middle course (literally “*chungyung*”). Going over what he has already learned, he gains some new knowledge. Earnest and simple, he respects and obeys the laws and usages of social life (*li*).

Therefore, when in a position of authority, he is not proud; in a subordinate position, he is not insubordinate. When there is moral social order in the country, what he speaks will bring prosperity to the nation; and when there is no moral social order in the country, his silence will ensure forbearance for himself.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Here we see the connection between the realization of the true self and harmony with the outside world, between “sincerity” and “harmony.”

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“With wisdom and good sense,  
He guards his life from harm.”

That is the description of the moral man.

(XXIX) To attain to the sovereignty of the world, there are three important things necessary, which would make it perfect.

(XXVIII)<sup>8</sup> Although a man may occupy a position of authority, yet unless he possesses the moral character fitting him for his task, he may not take upon himself to make changes in the established religious and artistic institutions (literally “ritual and music”). Although one may possess the moral character fitting him for his task, yet, unless he occupies the position of authority, he may not take upon himself to make changes in the established religious and artistic institutions.

Confucius remarked: “I have tried to understand the moral and religious institutions (*li*) of the Hsia Dynasty, but what remains of those institutions in the present state of Ch’i does not furnish sufficient evidence. I have studied the moral and religious institutions of the Shang (Yin) Dynasty; the remains of them are still preserved in the present state of Sung. I have studied the moral and religious institutions of the present Chou Dynasty, which being now in use, I follow in practice.”

(XXIX) Coming from those in power, a system may be lacking in historical authority (“historic evidences”), however excellent it may be; what is lacking in historical authority cannot command credence; and what cannot command credence the people will never obey. Coming from those not in authority, a system may not command respect, however excellent it may be; what does not command respect cannot command credence; and what cannot command credence the people will never obey.

Therefore every system of moral laws must be based upon the man’s own consciousness, verified by the common experience of mankind, tested by due sanction of historical experience and found without error, applied to the operations and processes of nature in the physical universe and found to be without contradiction, laid before the gods without question or fear, and able to wait a hundred generations and have it confirmed without a doubt by a Sage of posterity. The fact that he is able to confront the spiritual powers of the universe without any fear shows that he understands the laws of God. The fact that he is prepared to wait a hundred generations for confirmation from the Sage of pos-

<sup>8</sup> The following two paragraphs are incorporated here from “Chapter 28.” The “three important things” (position, character and appeal to history) become otherwise unintelligible.

terity without any misgiving shows that he understands the laws of man.

Wherefore it is that it is true of the really great moral man that every move he makes becomes an example for generations; every act he does becomes a model for generations and every word he utters becomes a guide for generations. Those who are far away look up to him, while those who are near do not decrease their respect for him. In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“There they found no fault of him,  
Here they never tire of him;  
Thus from day to day and night to night  
They will perpetuate his praise!”

There never was a moral man who did not answer this description and who yet could obtain timely recognition throughout the world.

(XXX) Confucius taught the truth originally handed down by the ancient Emperors Yao and Shun, and he adopted and perfected the system of social and religious laws established by the Emperors Wen and Wu. He shows that they harmonize with the divine order which governs the revolutions of the seasons in the Heaven above and that they fit in with the moral design which is to be seen in physical nature upon the Earth below.

These moral laws form one system with the laws by which Heaven and Earth support and contain, overshadow and canopy all things. These moral laws form the same system with the laws by which the seasons succeed each other and the sun and moon appear with the alternations of day and night. It is this same system of laws by which all created things are produced and develop themselves each in its order and system without injuring one another, and by which the operations of Nature take their course without conflict or confusion; the lesser forces flowing everywhere like river currents, while the great forces of Creation go silently and steadily on. It is this (one system running through all) that makes the Universe so impressively great.

(XXXI) It is only the man with the most perfect divine moral nature who is able to combine in himself quickness of apprehension, intelligence, insight and understanding—qualities necessary for the exercise of command—magnanimity, generosity, benignity and gentleness—qualities necessary for the exercise of patience, originality, energy, strength of character and determination—qualities necessary for the exercise of endurance, piety, noble seriousness, order and regularity—qualities necessary for the exercise of dignity, grace, method, subtlety and penetration—qualities necessary for the exercise of critical judgment.

Thus all-embracing and vast is the nature of such a man. Profound

it is and inexhaustible, like a living spring of water, ever running out with life and vitality. All-embracing and vast, it is like Heaven. Profound and inexhaustible, it is like the abyss.

As soon as such a man shall make his appearance in the world, all people will reverence him. Whatever he says, all people will believe it. Whatever he does, all people will be pleased with it. Thus his fame and name will spread and fill all the civilized world (literally "China"), extending even to savage countries, wherever ships and carriages reach, wherever the labour and enterprise of man penetrate, wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustains, wherever the sun and moon shine, wherever frost and dew fall. All who have life and breath will honour and love him. Therefore we may say: "He is the equal of God."

(XXXII) It is only he in this world who has realized his absolute self that can order and adjust the great relations of human society, fix the fundamental principles of morality, and understand the laws of growth and reproduction of the Universe.

Now, where does such a man derive his power and knowledge, except from himself? How simple and self-contained his true manhood! How unfathomable the depth of his mind! How infinitely grand and vast the moral height of his nature! Who can understand such a nature except he who is gifted with the most perfect intelligence and endowed with the highest divine qualities of character, and who has reached in his moral development the level of the gods?

## X. EPILOGUE

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

"Over her brocaded robe,  
She wore a plain and simple dress,"

in that way showing her dislike of the loudness of its colour and magnificence. Thus the ways of the moral man are unobtrusive and yet they grow more and more in power and evidence; whereas the ways of the vulgar person are ostentatious, but lose more and more in influence until they perish and disappear.

The life of the moral man is plain, and yet not unattractive; it is simple, and yet full of grace; it is easy, and yet methodical. He knows that accomplishment of great things consists in doing little things well. He knows that great effects are produced by small causes. He knows the evidence and reality of what cannot be perceived by the senses. Thus he is enabled to enter into the world of ideas and morals.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“How deep the fish may dive below,  
And yet it is quite clearly seen.”

Therefore the moral man must examine into his own heart and see that he has no cause for self-reproach, that he has no evil thought in his mind. Wherein the moral man is superior to other men consists even in those things that people do not notice.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“In your secret chamber even you are judged;  
See you do nothing to blush for,  
Though but the ceiling looks down upon you.”

Therefore the moral man, even when he is not doing anything, is serious; and, even when he does not speak, is truthful.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“All through the solemn rite not a word was spoken,  
And yet all strife was banished from their hearts.”

Hence the moral man, without the inducement of rewards, is able to make the people good; and without the show of anger, to awe them into fear more than if he had used the most dreadful instruments of punishment.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“He makes no show of his moral worth,  
Yet all the princes follow in his steps.”

Hence the moral man, by living a life of simple truth and earnestness, alone can help to bring peace and order in the world.

In the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“I keep in mind the fine moral qualities  
Which make no great noise or show.”

Confucius remarked: “Among the means for the regeneration of mankind, those made with noise and show are of the least importance.”

In another place in the *Book of Songs* it is said:

“His virtue is light as hair.”

Still a hair is something material. “The workings of Almighty God have neither sound nor smell.” That is the highest development of our moral nature.



# CHINESE POETRY



# Chinese Poetry

## INTRODUCTION

POETRY is the most difficult form of literature to translate, particularly Chinese poetry. Nevertheless, through the labours of many talented scholars, it has been possible for the West to appreciate something of the spirit of the Chinese poetic genius. Chinese poetic development is important, and almost all good Chinese scholars leave behind a volume of poems as well as prose. Only T'ang poetry is comparatively well known, and of this not one ten-thousandth part has been translated. Not even one-twentieth part of Li Po's works has been translated, so enormous was his output. "T'ang poetry" is a name for one kind of verse with a conventional and strictly prescribed pattern, later used in official examinations for imperial service, and therefore learned by every ambitious scholar. It is therefore not confined to poetry written in the T'ang Dynasty, although Li Po and Tu Fu represented its peak of development. Again, T'ang poetry is only one corner of Chinese poetry, and the T'ang poets, including Li Po and Tu Fu wrote some of their best things in the so-called "ancient poetry," i.e., freer style. The whole field of Sung *Ts'e*, poems written to music, with complicated metres, and Yüan dramas, and other dramatic poetry is practically unknown to the West.

The following selections give some samples of Ancient Poems, T'ang Poems, and folk poetry.

### *Some Great Ancient Poems*

These selections are from the classic *Book of Poetry*, edited by Confucius. History records that there were 3,000 ancient poems, and from

these, Confucius made a selection of 305 poems, and moreover arranged them according to their music. A great majority of them were folk songs, or "Songs of the States," while some were sacred odes used at royal sacrifices. There are five of these odes belonging to the Shang Dynasty (1783-1122 B.C.). The background for this collection is, according to *Feng Shu T'ung*, the ancient custom of annual collecting of folk songs by officers for the purpose of finding out the state of public opinion. As will be seen, many of these were satires of the government, for the Chinese people from the earliest days showed an unusual propensity to criticize their government.

The difference between T'ang poetry and the *Book of Poetry* is the difference between a carefully arranged flower twig in a vase, where every angle and curve is carefully studied, and the luxuriant growth of a wild garden. These poems represent to us the voice of the ancient people, fresh and direct and unaffected, and sometimes unashamed. A flirt spoke the voice of a flirt, which is impossible in the poems of the T'ang scholars. We hear also an amazing variety of themes, of elopements, the maiden's longings, the forsaken wife, the divorced woman, the luxury of the rich, the hunt, wars, soldiers on service, and satires against the wealthy class.

I have tried here to give a few representative samples, by two translators who know Chinese thoroughly and one who does not. Of all translations of Chinese poetry, I think Helen Waddell's is the best, (*Lyrics from the Chinese*, Holt). She based her translations on James Legge's translation and his notes, and her translations are far from literal. Her method is to catch the essence or spirit of a poem and weave it into an exquisite creation with whatever material from the poem she needs for that particular purpose. And she is completely successful. One cannot help being impressed by the fact that the fleeting thought, the sudden heart cry of a second of some peasant woman some three thousand years ago in China can be recaptured for us in the English language by one who does not know her language. Herbert A. Giles' two poems are quite charming. Dr. Legge's translations in regard to diction, rhythm and general effect often fall short of the true poetic level, but he did not mistranslate, and his work gives us the means of getting a glimpse of the scope and variety of the *Book of Poetry*. He has translated the *Book* complete, and some of his verses are certainly successful. Really the *Book of Poetry* is easier to translate than the T'ang poems, because there is not the problem of rendering the sophisticated subtleties of the poet's choice of words. The ancient poems can be very tender, but that tenderness is always fresh and whole and unaffected.

*Ch'ü Yüan*

Ch'ü Yüan (343-c. 290 B.C.) ranks undoubtedly as one of the three or four greatest poets of China characterized by his intensity of feeling, his rich mythological details, and his sombre imagination. The Songs of Ch'u belong in an entirely different category from either the poems of Confucian China, or from the later T'ang poems. His poems are at the same time among those most difficult to read in Chinese.

*Li Po*

Li Po (A.D. 701-762) is selected here as representing the T'ang poets. He is the Prince of Chinese Poets, and is known among the Chinese as the "Poet Fairy," while Tu Fu is known as the "Poet Sage," which sufficiently characterizes the two friends. His poetry is chiefly distinguished by *élan* and romantic abandon, and a magic fairylike quality which transforms the world before him by the very use of his language. It can hardly be hoped that readers will understand his charm and melody, for Li Po has veritably the soul of music. His poems sing by themselves with an inevitableness and freedom from effort. Every syllable, every tone and every imagery co-operates to hypnotize the Chinese reader. The language he used could be simple or most ornate as he wished, but when he struck an inevitable phrase, we felt as if we had been ignorant of the Chinese language or dumb, or else we might have said it. A reliable account of Li Po's life, as well as translations of biographical notes on the poet by Chinese authors, may be found in the Introduction to Obata's *Li-Po, the Chinese Poet* (Dutton). A clear account of the general field of Chinese poetry, with some details on technique, may be found in Kiang Kang-hu's essay on "Chinese Poetry" in the introduction to Witter Bynner's *Jade Mountain* (Knopf). I regard Witter Bynner's translation of *Li Po* as on the whole the best. I have supplied a few necessary footnotes.

*The Tale of Meng Chiang*

The tale is one of the best known to all Chinese children. The present selection is a translation by Genevieve Wimsatt (*The Lady of the Long Wall*, Columbia University Press) from what is known as a Chinese "drum story." The "drum story" is still one of the most popular forms of story-telling in China, and this material may be regarded as representative of Chinese folk poetry. The authors of such drum stories are generally unknown, but there is a stock of literary phrases, born of the drama, which is ever available at the hand of the professional singers

who improve upon them to suit their purposes as they hand them down from generation to generation. Their language is not entirely unliterary, but it has the great virtue of being always intelligible to the common people. This is the story of the bride who went in search of her husband, conscripted to build the Great Wall, in the third century B.C., and who, upon discovering her husband's bones, wept so profusely that a section of the Great Wall melted down. It was a real story, with later alterations, that gained immediate popularity even in Han days and has never lost its hold on the people for 2,000 years.

The "drum story" can best be explained as a monologue, told with all the modulation and gestures of a monologue reciter's art, to the rhythm of a hand-drum beaten by the story-teller himself. At times, it breaks out into song. Miss Wimsatt's admirable verse rendering gives the reader a sense of the varied rhythm and dramatic intensity of the original.

### *Mortal Thoughts of a Nun*

This is an extract from a popular Chinese drama, very much enjoyed by the Chinese audience. It is the only bit of dramatic poetry included in this anthology. Incidentally it shows the typically humorous, common-sense and irreligious attitude of the Chinese people.

# Some Great Ancient Lyrics

## I. POEMS TRANSLATED BY HELEN WADDELL

### *I*

Written in 718 B.C. It is the Chinese rendering of 'the world well lost.' Possibly, as one Yen Ts'an of the thirteenth century insists, 'intended to show the error of licentious connections.'

THE gourd has still its bitter leaves,  
And deep the crossing at the ford.  
I wait my lord.

The ford is brimming to its banks;  
The pheasant cries upon her mate.  
My lord is late.

The boatman still keeps beckoning,  
And others reach their journey's end.  
I wait my friend.

### *II*

Written in 826 B.C. It is inconsistent with the finest ideal of chastity that a Chinese woman should break her perpetual widowhood.

AH, let it drift, that boat of cypress wood,  
There in the middle of the Ho.  
He was my mate,

And until death I will go desolate.  
 Ah Mother! God!  
 How is it that ye will not understand?

Ah, let it drift, that boat of cypress wood,  
 There in the middle of the Ho.  
 He was my King.  
 I swear I will not do this evil thing.  
 Ah Mother! God!  
 How is it that ye will not understand?

### III

Written in the twelfth century before Christ. It is  
 possibly the oldest drinking-song in the world.

THE dew is heavy on the grass,  
 At last the sun is set.  
 Fill up, fill up the cups of jade,  
 The night's before us yet!

All night the dew will heavy lie  
 Upon the grass and clover.  
 Too soon, too soon, the dew will dry,  
 Too soon the night be over!

### IV

Written in the twelfth century before Christ, *c.* 1121.

THE morning glory climbs above my head,  
 Pale flowers of white and purple, blue and red.  
 I am disquieted.

Down in the withered grasses something stirred;  
 I thought it was his footfall that I heard.  
 Then a grasshopper chirred.

I climbed the hill just as the new moon showed,  
 I saw him coming on the southern road.  
 My heart lays down its load.



## V

Written 680 B.C. The 'Little Preface': 'A man's praise of his Poor Wife.'

I WENT out at the Eastern Gate,  
I saw the girls in clouds,  
Like clouds they were, and soft and bright,  
But in the crowds  
I thought on the maid who is my light,  
Down-drooping, soft as the grey twilight;  
She is my mate.

I went out by the Tower on the Wall,  
I saw the girls in flower,  
Like flowering rushes they swayed and bent,  
But in that hour  
I thought on the maid who is my saint,  
In her thin white robe and her colouring faint;  
She is my all.

## VI

Written 718 B.C. from the harem of the Palace of Wei.

THE wind blows from the North.  
He looks and his eyes are cold.  
He looks and smiles and then goes forth,  
My grief grows old.

The wind blows and the dust.  
To-morrow he swears he will come.  
His words are kind, but he breaks his trust.  
My heart is numb.

All day the wind blew strong,  
The sun was buried deep.  
I have thought of him so long, so long,  
I cannot sleep.

The clouds are black with night,  
 The thunder brings no rain.  
 I wake and there is no light,  
 I hear my pain.

## VII

Written 769 B.C. by a divorced woman.

YELLOW's the robe for honour,  
 And green is for disgrace.  
 I wear the green and not the gold,  
 And turn away my face.

I wear the green of scorning,  
 Who wore the gold so long.  
 I think upon the Sages,  
 Lest I should do them wrong.

It is for her he shames me.  
 I sit and think apart.  
 I wonder if the Sages knew  
 A woman's heart.

## VIII

Written 826 B.C. He complains of a broken assignation.

THE willows by the Eastern Gate  
 Are deep in sheltering leaves.  
 You said 'Before the night grows late,'  
 —There's twittering in the eaves.

The willows by the Eastern Gate  
 All night in shadow are.  
 You said 'Before the night grows late,'  
 —There shines the morning star.

## IX

Written 718 B.C.

I CANNOT come to you. I am afraid.  
I will not come to you. There, I have said.  
Though all the night I lie awake and know  
That you are lying, waking, even so.  
Though day by day you take the lonely road,  
And come at nightfall to a dark abode.

Yet if so be you are indeed my friend,  
Then in the end,  
There is one road, a road I've never gone,  
And down that road you shall not pass alone.  
And there's one night you'll find me by your side.  
The night that they shall tell me you have died.

## X

Written c. 605 B.C.

THE rushes on the marsh are green  
And in the wind they bend.  
I saw a woman walking there,  
Near daylight's end.

On the black water of the marsh,  
The lotus buds swim white.  
I saw her standing by the verge  
At fall of night.

All the long night I lie awake,  
And sleep I cannot find.  
I see her slim as any rush  
Sway in the wind.

I shut my eyes and see again  
The whiteness of her throat,  
On the black water of the night  
Like lotus float.

## XI

Written 718 B.C.

THE K'e still ripples to its banks,  
 The moorfowl cry.  
 My hair was gathered in a knot,  
 And you came by.

Selling of silk you were, a lad  
 Not of our kin;  
 You passed at sunset on the road  
 From far-off Ts'in.

The frogs were croaking in the dusk;  
 The grass was wet.  
 We talked together, and I laughed;  
 I hear it yet.

I thought that I would be your wife;  
 I had your word.  
 And so I took the road with you,  
 And crossed the ford.

I do not know when first it was  
 Your eyes looked cold.  
 But all this was three years ago,  
 And I am old.

## XII

Written 769 B.C.

My lord is gone away to serve the King.  
 The pigeons homing at the set of sun  
 Are side by side upon the courtyard wall,  
 And far away I hear the herdsmen call  
 The goats upon the hill when day is done.  
 But I, I know not when he will come home.  
 I live the days alone.

My lord is gone away to serve the King.  
 I hear a pigeon stirring in the nest,  
 And in the field a pheasant crying late.  
 —She has not far to go to find her mate.  
 There is a hunger will not let me rest.  
 The days have grown to months and months to years,  
 And I have no more tears.

## XIII

Written 675 B.C. "Is there anything whereof it may  
 be said, 'See, this is new? it hath been already of old  
 time, which was before us.' "

I WOULD have gone to my lord in his need,  
 Have galloped there all the way,  
 But this is a matter concerns the State,  
 And I, being a woman, must stay.

I watched them leaving the palace yard,  
 In carriage and robe of state.  
 I would have gone by the hills and the fords;  
 I know they will come too late.

I may walk in the garden and gather  
 Lilies of mother-of-pearl.  
 I had a plan would have saved the State.  
 —But mine are the thoughts of a girl.

The Elder Statesmen sit on the mats,  
 And wrangle through half the day;  
 A hundred plans they have drafted and dropped,  
 And mine was the only way.

## XIV

780 B.C. Jacques Bonhomme complains of the useless stars.

I SEE on high the Milky Way,  
 But here's a rougher road.  
 The Sacred Oxen shining stand;  
 They do not draw our load.

The Sieve is sparkling in the South,  
 But good and ill come through.  
 The Ladle opens wide its mouth,  
 And pours out naught for you.

At dawn the Weaving Sisters sleep,  
 At dusk they rise again;  
 But though their Shining Shuttle flies,  
 They weave no robe for men.

## XV

Written in the seventh century before Christ.

ON the moor is the creeping grass,  
 Parched, thirsting for the dew,  
 And over it the swallows dip and pass,  
 The live-long summer through.  
 I came at sunset, fevered with the heat,  
 Seeking I knew not what with listless feet.

On the moor is the creeping grass,  
 Deep-drenchèd with the dew,  
 And over it the swallows dip and pass,  
 The live-long summer through.  
 You came at sunrise, ere the dew was dried.  
 And I am satisfied.

II. TWO POEMS TRANSLATED BY HERBERT A. GILES <sup>1</sup>*To a Young Gentleman*

Don't come in, sir, please!  
 Don't break my willow-trees!  
 Not that *that* would very much grieve me;  
 But alack-a-day! what would my parents say?  
 And love you as I may,  
 I cannot bear to think what that would be.

Don't cross my wall, sir, please!  
Don't spoil my mulberry-trees!  
Not that *that* would very much grieve me;  
But alack-a-day! what would my brothers say?  
And love you as I may,  
I cannot bear to think what that would be.

Keep outside, sir, please!  
Don't spoil my sandal-trees!  
Not that *that* would very much grieve me;  
But alack-a-day! what would the world say?  
And love you as I may,  
I cannot bear to think what that would be.

*To a Man*

You seemed a guileless youth enough,  
Offering for silk your woven stuff;  
But silk was not required by you:  
I was the silk you had in view.  
With you I crossed the ford, and while  
We wandered on for many a mile  
I said, "I do not wish delay,  
But friends must fix our wedding-day. . . .  
Oh, do not let my words give pain,  
But with the autumn come again."

And then I used to watch and wait  
To see you passing through the gate;  
And sometimes when I watched in vain,  
My tears would flow like falling rain;  
But when I saw my darling boy,  
I laughed and cried aloud for joy.  
The fortune-tellers, you declared,  
Had all pronounced us duly paired;  
"Then bring a carriage," I replied,  
"And I'll away to be your bride."

The mulberry-leaf, not yet undone  
 By autumn chill, shines in the sun.  
 O tender love, I would advise,  
 Beware the fruit that tempts thy eyes!  
 O maiden fair, not yet a spouse,  
 List lightly not to lovers' vows!  
 A man may do this wrong, and time  
 Will fling its shadow o'er his crime;  
 A woman who has lost her name  
 Is doomed to everlasting shame.

The mulberry-tree upon the ground  
 Now sheds its yellow leaves around.  
 Three years have slipped away from me,  
 Since first I shared your poverty;  
 And now again, alas the day!  
 Back through the ford I take my way.  
 My heart is still unchanged, but you  
 Have uttered words now proved untrue;  
 And you have left me to deplore  
 A love that can be mine no more.

For three long years I was your wife,  
 And led in truth a toilsome life;  
 Early to rise and late to bed,  
 Each day alike passed o'er my head.  
 I honestly fulfilled my part;  
 And you—well, you have broke my heart.  
 The truth my brothers will <sup>1</sup> not know,  
 So all the more their gibes will flow.  
 I grieve in silence and repine  
 That such a wretched fate is mine.

Ah, hand in hand to face old age!—  
 Instead, I turn a bitter page.  
 O for the river-banks of yore;  
 Oh for the much-loved marshy shore;  
 The hours of girlhood, with my hair  
 Ungathered, as we lingered there.

<sup>1</sup> "shall" might be an improvement.



The words we spoke, that seemed so true,  
 I little thought that I should rue;  
 I little thought the vows we swore  
 Would some day bind us two no more.<sup>2</sup>

### III. POEMS TRANSLATED BY JAMES LEGGE

#### *The New Tower*

*(Satirizing the marriage of Duke Hsüan and his queen,  
 who had been contracted to marry his son.)*

The New tower, fresh and bright, they show,  
 Where its vast volume rolls the Ho;—  
     For bride a palace rare.  
 To Wei she came, a mate to find;  
 She sought a husband young and kind,  
     But found this mis-shaped bear.

There stands the New tower grand and high,  
 Where with still stream the Ho flows by;—  
     For bride a palace rare.  
 To Wei she came, a mate to find;  
 She sought a husband young and kind,  
     But found this mis-shaped bear.

As when the net for fish they set,  
 And lo! a goose ensnared they get,  
     They stamp with sudden ire;  
 So might *she* stamp who came to wed  
 The genial son, and in his stead  
     Got but the hump-backed sire.

#### *The Gudeman's Awa*

The gudeman's awa, for to fecht wi' the stranger,  
 An' when he'll be back, oh! my hert canna tell.  
 The hens gae to reist, an' the beests to their manger,  
 As hameward they wend frae their park on the hill.  
     But hoo can I, thus left alane,  
     Help thinking o' my man that's gane?

<sup>2</sup> Original last line reads: "Why talk about it any more?"

The gudeman's awa, for to fecht wi' the stranger,  
 An' lang will it be ere he see his fireside.  
 The hens gae to reist, an' the beests to their manger,  
 As the slantin' sunbeams throu the forest trees glide.  
 Heaven kens the lanesome things I think.  
 Heaven sen' my man his meat an' drink!

*The Gudeman's Come Hame*

The gudeman's come hame, an' his face weers a bloom,  
 His organ o' reeds he hads in his left han';  
 An' his richt han' ca's me to come till his room:—  
 It's siccan a joy; it's mair nor I can stan'.

The gudeman's come hame, an' he's pleesed I'll engage,  
 His gran' fether screen he hads in his left han';  
 An' his richt han' ca's me to come till the stage:—  
 It's siccan a joy; it's mair nor I can stan'.

*The Cock is Cawin'*

*(Translated into Scotch by Dr. Legge's nephew.)*

Says oor gudewife, "The cock is cawin'."  
 Quoth oor gudeman, "The day is dawin'."  
 "Get up, gudeman, an' tak a spy;  
 See gin the mornin'-star be high,  
 Syne tak a saunter roon' about;  
 There's rowth o' dyukes and geese to shoot.

"Lat flee, and bring them hame to me,  
 An' sic a dish as ye sall pree.  
 In comin' times as ower the strings  
 Your noddin' heed in rapture hings,  
 Supreme ower care, nor fasht wi' fears,  
 We'll baith grow auld in worth and years.

"An' when we meet the friends ye like,  
 I'll gie to each some little fyke;—  
 The lasses beads, trocks to their brithers,  
 An' auld-warld fairlies to their mithers.  
 Some nick-nack lovin' hands will fin',  
 To show the love that dwalls within."

*The Artful Boy*

O dear! that artful boy  
Refuses me a word!  
But, Sir, I shall enjoy  
My food, though you're absurd!

O dear! that artful boy  
My table will not share!  
But, Sir, I shall enjoy  
My rest, though you're not there!

*By the Eastern Gate*

By th' eastern gate, flat lies the ground,  
And madder there grows on the slope.  
Hard by my lover's house is found;—  
He keeps away, and mocks my hope.

Where chestnuts grow, near th' eastern gate,  
There stands a row, where is your home.  
My heart turns aye to you, its mate,  
But ah! to me you never come!

*The Student With Blue Collar*

You student, with the collar blue,  
Long pines my heart with anxious pain.  
Although I do not go to you,  
Why from all word do you refrain?

O you, with girdle strings of blue,  
My thoughts to you for ever roam!  
Although I do not go to you,  
Yet why to me should you not come?

How reckless you, how light and wild,  
There by the tower upon the wall!  
One day, from sight of you exiled,  
As long as three long months I call.

*On the Moor*

On the moor, where thickly grew  
 Creeping grass, bent down with dew,  
 There a handsome man drew nigh,  
 'Neath whose forehead, broad and high,  
 Gleamed his clear and piercing eye.  
 'Twas by accident we met;  
 Glad was I my wish to get.

Where the grass creeps o'er the moor,  
 With the dew all covered o'er,  
 There the finest man found I,  
 'Bove whose clear and piercing eye,  
 Rose his forehead, broad and high.  
 Chance gave us a meeting rare,  
 And we both were happy there.

*On Comes Her Chariot*

*(Satirizing the open shamelessness of a queen.)*

On comes her chariot, fast and loud,  
 With screen of bamboos finely wove,  
 And leather bright, vermilion-hued;—  
 Ts'e's daughter hastes to lawless love.  
 To this from Loo the road is smooth and plain;  
 'Twas but last night she started with her train.

Her four black steeds are beautiful;  
 Soft are the reins the driver holds.  
 The road from Loo is smooth and plain;—  
 Ts'e's daughter's heart its joy unfolds.  
 Full of complacency is she; nor shame  
 Abashes her, nor fear of evil name.

Broad flow the waters of the Wan,  
 And crowds of travellers go by.  
 The road from Loo is smooth and plain;—  
 She looks around with careless eye.  
 That many see her gives her no concern;  
 Her thoughts to her licentious fancy turn.

On sweep the waters of the Wan;  
More numerous are the travellers now.  
The road from Loo is smooth and plain;—  
Ts'e's daughter shows her brazen brow.  
At ease and proud, she holds her onward way,  
Careless of what all think of her display.

*A Soldier's Thought of Home*

To the top of that tree-clad hill I go,  
And towards my father I gaze,  
Till with my mind's eye his form I espy,  
And my mind's ear hears how he says:—  
“Alas for my son on service abroad!  
He rests not from morning till eve.  
May he careful be, and come back to me!  
While he is away, how I grieve!”

To the top of that barren hill I climb,  
And towards my mother I gaze,  
Till with my mind's eye her form I espy,  
And my mind's ear hears how she says:—  
“Alas for my child on service abroad!  
He never in sleep shuts an eye.  
May he careful be, and come back to me!  
In the wild may his body not lie!”

Up the lofty ridge I, toiling, ascend,  
And towards my brother I gaze,  
Till with my mind's eye his form I espy,  
And my mind's ear hear how he says:—  
“Alas! my young brother, serving abroad,  
All day with his comrades must roam.  
May he careful be, and come back to me,  
And die not away from his home!”

*The Woodman's Song*

*(One of the finest and most direct satires. I have taken the liberty of substituting an exact translation of the two lines at the end of each verse, where Dr. Legge versifies on his own.—Ed.)*

*K'an-k'an* upon the sandal trees  
 The woodman's strokes resound.  
 Then on the bank he lays the trunks  
 His axe brings to the ground;  
 The while the stream goes rippling by,  
 Its waters cool and clear.  
 You sow no seed; no harvest tasks  
 Your soft hands take in charge;  
 And yet each boasts three hundred farms,  
 And stores the produce large.  
 You never join the hunt's halloo,  
 Nor dare to share its toils;  
 Yet lo! your wide courtyards are seen  
 Hung round with badgers' spoils.  
 That gentleman!  
 He does not eat the bread of idleness indeed!

*K'an-k'an* upon the sandal wood  
 The woodman's strokes resound,  
 Then by the river's side he lays  
 What fit for spokes is found;  
 The while the river onward flows,  
 Its waters clear and smooth.  
 You sow no seed; no harvest tasks  
 Your dainty fingers stain;  
 And yet each boasts three million sheaves;—  
 Whence gets he all that grain?  
 You never join the hunt's halloo,  
 Nor brave its ventures bold;  
 Yet lo! your wide courtyards display  
 Those boars of three years old.  
 That gentleman!  
 He does not eat the bread of idleness indeed!

*K'an-k'an* resound the woodman's strokes  
 Upon the sandal wood;  
 Then on the river's lips he lays  
 What for his wheels is good;  
 The while the river onward flows,  
 Soft rippled by the wind.  
 You sow no seed; no harvest tasks  
 Your soft hands undertake;  
 Yet grain each boasts, three hundred binns;—  
 Who his that grain did make?  
 You never join the hunt's halloo;  
 Your feeble courage fails;  
 Yet lo! your wide courtyards display  
 Large strings of slaughtered quails.  
 That gentleman!  
 He does not eat the bread of idleness indeed!

### *Large Rats*

*(The poet proposes to leave his country Wei.)*

Large rats, large rats, let us entreat  
 That you our millet will not eat.  
 But the large rats we mean are you,  
 With whom three years we've had to do,  
 And all that time have never known  
 One look of kindness on us thrown.  
 We take our leave of Wei and you;  
 That happier land we long to view.  
 O happy land! O happy land!  
 There in our proper place we'll stand.

Large rats, large rats, let us entreat  
 You'll not devour our crops of wheat.  
 But the large rats we mean are you,  
 With whom three years we've had to do;  
 And all that time you never wrought  
 One kindly act to cheer our lot.  
 To you and Wei we bid farewell,  
 Soon in that happier State to dwell.  
 O happy State! O happy State!  
 There shall we learn to bless our fate.

Large rats, large rats, let us entreat  
 Our springing grain you will not eat.  
 But the large rats we mean are you,  
 With whom three years we've had to do.  
 From you there came not all that while  
 One word of comfort 'mid our toil.  
 We take our leave of you and Wei;  
 And to those happier coasts we flee.  
 O happy coasts, to you we wend!  
 There shall our groans and sorrows end.

*Owl, O Owl!*

(Written in 1113 B.C., by the great Duke of Chou, brother of King Wu. King Wu was dead and his young son was on the throne. Two of the young king's brothers had rebelled, and the Duke, who was assisting the young king, was compelled to fight the rebellion for three years. The Duke wrote this, comparing the rebels trying to destroy the Imperial house to the owls.—Ed.)

Owl, O owl, hear my request,  
 And do not, owl, destroy my nest.  
 You have taken my young,  
 Though I over them hung,  
 With the nursing of love and of care.  
 Pity me, pity me! Hear my prayer.

Ere the clouds the sky had obscured,  
 The mulberry roots I secured.  
 Door and window around,  
 Them so firmly I bound,  
 That I said, casting downward my eyes,  
 "Dare any of you my house despise?"

I tugged with my claws and I tore,  
 And my mouth and my claws were sore  
 So the rushes I sought,  
 And all other things brought;  
 For to perfect the house I was bent,  
 And I grudged no toil with this intent.



My wings are deplorably torn,  
And my tail is much injured and worn.  
Tossed about by the wind,  
While the rain beats unkind,  
Oh! my house is in peril of harm,  
And this note I scream out in alarm.

#### IV. ODES TRANSLATED BY JAMES LEGGE

##### *Two Sacrificial Odes*

##### I. THE TSAI SHU

(The 'Preface' says that this ode was used in spring, when the king in person turned up some furrows in the field set apart for that purpose, and prayed at the altars of the spirits of the land and the grain, for an abundant year.)

They clear away the grass and the bushes; and the ground is laid open by their ploughs. In thousands of pairs they remove the roots, some in the low wet land, some along the dykes.

There are the master and his eldest son; his younger sons, and all their children; their strong helpers and their hired servants. How the noise of their eating the viands brought to them resounds! (The husbands) think lovingly of their wives; (the wives) keep close to their husbands. (Then) with their sharp ploughshares they set to work on the south-lying acres.

They sow their various kinds of grain, each seed containing in it a germ of life. In unbroken lines rises the blade, and, well nourished, the stalks grow long. Luxuriant looks the young grain, and the weeders go among it in multitudes.

Then come the reapers in crowds. And the grain is piled up in the fields, myriads, and hundreds of thousands, and millions (of stacks); for the spirits and for sweet spirits, to offer to our ancestors, male and female, and to provide for all ceremonies.

Fragrant is their aroma, enhancing the glory of the state. Like pepper is their smell, to give comfort to the aged.

It is not here only that there is this (abundance); it is not now only that there is such a time:—from of old it has been thus.

## II. THE CH'U TS'U

(A poetic description of sacrificial and festive services in the ancestral temple, and their connection with husbandry.)

Thick grew the tribulus (on the ground), but they cleared away its thorny bushes. Why did they this of old? That we might plant our millet and sacrificial millet; that our millet might be abundant, and our sacrificial millet luxuriant. When our barns are full, and our stacks can be counted by tens of myriads, we proceed to make spirits and prepared grain, for offerings and sacrifice. We seat the representatives of the dead, and urge them to eat:—thus seeking to increase our bright happiness.

With correct and reverent deportment, the bulls and rams all pure, we proceed to the winter and autumnal sacrifices. Some flay (the victims); some cook (their flesh); some arrange (the meat); some adjust (the pieces of it). The officer of prayer sacrifices inside the temple gate. And all the sacrificial service is complete and brilliant. Grandly come our progenitors; their spirits happily enjoy the offerings; their filial descendant receives blessing:—they will reward him with great happiness, with myriads of years, life without end.

They attend to the furnaces with reverence; they prepare the trays, which are very large;—some for the roast meat, some for the broiled. Wives presiding are still and reverent, preparing the numerous (smaller) dishes. The guests and visitors present the cup all round. Every form is according to rule; every smile and word are as they should be. The spirits quietly come, and respond with great blessings,—myriads of years as the (fitting) reward.

We are very much exhausted, and have performed every ceremony without error. The able officer of prayer announces (the will of the spirits), and goes to the filial descendant to convey it:—'Fragrant has been your filial sacrifice, and the spirits have enjoyed your spirits and viands. They confer on you a hundred blessings; each as it is desired, each as sure as law. You have been exact and expeditious; you have been correct and careful; they will ever confer on you the choicest favours, in myriads and tens of myriads.'

The ceremonies having thus been completed and the bells and drums having given their warning, the filial descendant goes to his place, and the able officer of prayer makes his announcement, 'The spirits have drunk to the full.' The great representatives of the dead then rise, and the bells and drums escort their withdrawal, (on which) the spirits tranquilly return (to whence they came). All the servants, and the presiding wives, remove (the trays and dishes) without delay. The (sacrificer's) uncles and cousins all repair to the private feast.

The musicians all go in to perform, and give their soothing aid at the second blessing. Your viands are set forth; there is no dissatisfaction, but all feel happy. They drink to the full, and eat to the full; great and small, they bow their heads (saying), 'The spirits enjoyed your spirits and viands, and will cause you to live long. Your sacrifices, all in their seasons, are completely discharged by you. May your sons and your grandsons never fail to perpetuate these services!'

# Ch'ü Yüan

*Translated by Arthur Waley*

## THE GREAT SUMMONS

*When Ch'ü Yüan had been exiled from the Court for nine years, he became so despondent that he feared his soul would part from his body and he would die. It was then that he made the poem called "The Great Summons," calling upon his soul not to leave him.*

GREEN Spring receiveth  
The vacant earth;  
The white sun shineth;  
Spring wind provoketh  
To burst and burgeon  
Each sprout and flower.

In those dark caves where Winter lurketh  
Hide not, my Soul!  
O Soul come back again! O, do not stray!

O Soul come back again and go not east or west, nor north or south!  
For to the East a mighty water drowneth Earth's other shore;  
Tossed on its waves and heaving with its tides  
The hornless Dragon of the Ocean rideth:  
Clouds gather low and fogs enfold the sea  
And gleaming ice drifts past.  
O Soul go not to the East,  
To the silent Valley of Sunrise!

O Soul go not to the South  
Where mile on mile the earth is burnt away  
And poisonous serpents slither through the flames;  
Where on precipitous paths or in deep woods

Tigers and leopards prowl,  
 And water-scorpions wait;  
 Where the king-python rears his giant head.  
 O Soul, go not to the South  
 Where the three-footed tortoise spits disease!

O Soul go not to the West  
 Where level wastes of sand stretch on and on;  
 And demons rage, swine-headed, hairy-skinned,  
 With bulging eyes;  
 Who in wild laughter gnash projecting fangs.  
 O Soul go not to the West  
 Where many perils wait!

O Soul go not to the North,  
 To the Lame Dragon's frozen peaks;  
 Where trees and grasses dare not grow;  
 Where a river runs too wide to cross  
 And too deep to plumb,  
 And the sky is white with snow  
 And the cold cuts and kills.  
 O Soul seek not to fill  
 The treacherous voids of the north!

O Soul come back to idleness and peace.  
 In quietude enjoy  
 The lands of Ching and Ch'u.  
 There work your will and follow your desire  
 Till sorrow is forgot,  
 And carelessness shall bring you length of days.  
 O Soul come back to joys beyond all telling!

Where thirty cubits high at harvest-time  
 The corn is stacked;  
 Where pies are cooked of millet and bearded-maize.  
 Guests watch the steaming bowls  
 And sniff the pungency of peppered herbs.  
 The cunning cook adds slices of bird-flesh,  
 Pigeon and yellow-heron and black-crane.  
 They taste the badger-stew.  
 O Soul come back to feed on foods you love!

Next are brought  
 Fresh turtle, and sweet chicken cooked in cheese  
 Pressed by the men of Ch'u.  
 And pickled sucking-pig  
 And flesh of whelps floating in liver-sauce  
 With salad of minced radishes in brine;  
 All served with that hot spice of southernwood  
 The land of Wu supplies.  
 O Soul come back to choose the meats you love!

Roasted daw, steamed widgeon and grilled quail—  
 On every fowl they fare.  
 Boiled perch and sparrow broth,—in each preserved  
 The separate flavour that is most its own.  
 O Soul come back to where such dainties wait!

The four strong liquors are warming at the fire  
 So that they grate not on the drinker's throat.  
 How fragrant rise their fumes, how cool their taste!  
 Such drink is not for louts or serving-men!  
 And wise distillers from the land of Wu  
 Blend unfermented spirit with white yeast  
 And brew the *li* of Ch'u.  
 O Soul come back and let your yearnings cease!

Reed-organs from the lands of T'ai and Ch'in  
 And Wei and Cheng  
 Gladden the feasters, and old songs are sung:  
 The "Rider's Song" that once  
 Fu-hsi, the ancient monarch, made;  
 And the harp-songs of Ch'u.  
 Then after prelude from the flutes of Chao  
 The ballad-singer's voice rises alone.  
 O Soul come back to the hollow mulberry-tree! <sup>1</sup>

Eight and eight the dancers sway,  
 Weaving their steps to the poet's voice  
 Who speaks his odes and rhapsodies;  
 They tap their bells and beat their chimes  
 Rigidly, lest harp and flute  
 Should mar the measure.

<sup>1</sup> The harp.

Then rival singers of the Four Domains  
 Compete in melody, till not a tune  
 Is left unsung that human voice could sing.  
 O Soul come back and listen to their songs!

Then women enter whose red lips and dazzling teeth  
 Seduce the eye;  
 But meek and virtuous, trained in every art;  
 Fit sharers of play-time,  
 So soft their flesh and delicate their bones.  
 O Soul come back and let them ease your woe!

Then enter other ladies with laughing lips  
 And sidelong glances under moth-eyebrows;  
 Whose cheeks are fresh and red;  
 Ladies both great of heart and long of limb,  
 Whose beauty by sobriety is matched.  
 Well-padded cheeks and ears with curving rim,  
 High-arching eyebrows, as with compass drawn,  
 Great hearts and loving gestures—all are there;  
 Small waist and necks as slender as the clasp  
 Of courtiers' brooches.  
 O Soul come back to those whose tenderness  
 Drives angry thoughts away!

Last enter those  
 Whose every action is contrived to please;  
 Black-painted eyebrows and white-powdered cheeks.  
 They reek with scent; with their long sleeves they brush  
 The faces of the feasters whom they pass,  
 Or pluck the coats of those who will not stay.  
 O Soul come back to pleasures of the night!

A summer-house with spacious rooms  
 And a high hall with beams stained red;  
 A little closet in the southern wing  
 Reached by a private stair.  
 And round the house a covered way should run  
 Where horses might be trained.  
 And sometimes riding, sometimes going afoot  
 You shall explore, O Soul, the parks of spring;  
 Your jewelled axles gleaming in the sun

And yoke inlaid with gold;  
Or amid orchises and sandal-trees  
Shall walk in the dark woods.  
O Soul come back and live for these delights!

Peacocks shall fill your gardens; you shall rear  
The roc and phoenix, and red jungle-fowl,  
Whose cry at dawn assembles river storks  
To join the play of cranes and ibises;  
Where the wild-swan all day  
Pursues the glint of idle king-fishers.  
O Soul come back to watch the birds in flight!

He who has found such manifold delights  
Shall feel his cheeks glow  
And the blood-spirit dancing through his limbs.  
Stay with me, Soul, and share  
The span of days that happiness will bring;  
See sons and grandsons serving at the Court  
Ennobled and enriched.  
O Soul come back and bring prosperity  
To house and stock!

The roads that lead to Ch'u  
Shall teem with travellers as thick as clouds,  
A thousand miles away.  
For the Five Orders of Nobility  
Shall summon sages to assist the King  
And with godlike discrimination choose  
The wise in council; by their aid to probe  
The hidden discontents of humble men  
And help the lonely poor.  
O Soul come back and end what we began!

Fields, villages and lanes  
Shall throng with happy men;  
Good rule protect the people and make known  
The King's benevolence to all the land;  
Stern discipline prepare  
Their natures for the soft caress of Art.  
O Soul come back to where the good are praised!



Like the sun shining over the four seas  
 Shall be the reputation of our King;  
 His deeds, matched only in Heaven, shall repair  
 The wrongs endured by every tribe of men,—  
 Northward to Yu and southward to Annam,  
 To the Sheep's Gut Mountain and the Eastern Seas.  
 O Soul come back to where the wise are sought!

Behold the glorious virtues of our King  
 Triumphant, terrible;  
 Behold with solemn faces in the Hall  
 The Three Grand Ministers walk up and down,—  
 None chosen for the post save landed-lords  
 Or, in default, Knights of the Nine Degrees.  
 At the first ray of dawn already is hung  
 The shooting-target, where with bow in hand  
 And arrows under arm,  
 Each archer does obeisance to each,  
 Willing to yield his rights of precedence.  
 O Soul come back to where honour still  
 The name of the Three Kings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Yü, T'ang and Wen, the three just rulers of antiquity.

# Li Po

*Translated by Witter Bynner from the texts of  
Kiang Kang-hu*

## IN THE QUIET NIGHT

So bright a gleam on the foot of my bed—  
Could there have been a frost already?  
Lifting myself to look, I found that it was moonlight.  
Sinking back again, I thought suddenly of home.

## A BITTER LOVE

How beautiful she looks, opening the pearly casement,  
And how quiet she leans, and how troubled her brow is!  
You may see the tears now, bright on her cheek,  
But not the man she so bitterly loves.

## A SIGH FROM A STAIRCASE OF JADE

(Written to Music)

Her jade-white staircase is cold with dew;  
Her silk soles are wet, she lingered there so long . . .  
Behind her closed casement, why is she still waiting,  
Watching through its crystal pane the glow of the autumn moon?

## A FAREWELL TO MÊNG HAO-JAN ON HIS WAY TO YANG-CHOU

You have left me behind, old friend, at the Yellow Crane Terrace,  
On your way to visit Yang-chou in the misty month of flowers;  
Your sail, a single shadow, becomes one with the blue sky,  
Till now I see only the river, on its way to heaven.

## THROUGH THE YANG-TSZE GORGES

From the walls of Po-ti high in the coloured dawn  
To Kiang-ling by night-fall is three hundred miles,<sup>1</sup>  
Yet monkeys are still calling on both banks behind me  
To my boat these ten thousand mountains away.

## A SONG OF PURE HAPPINESS

(Written to Music for Lady Yang)

### I

Her robe is a cloud, her face a flower;  
Her balcony, glimmering with the bright spring dew,  
Is either the tip of earth's Jade Mountain  
Or a moon-edged roof of paradise.

### II

There's a perfume stealing moist from a shaft of red blossom,  
And a mist, through the heart, from the magical Hill of Wu—  
The palaces of China have never known such beauty—  
Not even Flying Swallow with all her glittering garments.

### III

Lovely now together, his lady and his flowers  
Lighten for ever the Emperor's eye,  
As he listens to the sighing of the far spring wind  
Where she leans on a railing in the Aloe Pavilion.

<sup>1</sup> Suggesting the speed of the current and the boat.

## A MESSAGE TO MÈNG HAO-JAN

Master, I hail you from my heart,  
 And your fame arisen to the skies. . . .  
 Renouncing in ruddy youth the importance of hat and chariot,  
 You chose pine-trees and clouds; and now, white-haired,  
 Drunk with the moon, a sage of dreams,  
 Flower-bewitched, you are deaf to the Emperor . . .  
 High mountain, how I long to reach you,  
 Breathing your sweetness even here!

## A FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

With a blue line of mountains north of the wall,  
 And east of the city a white curve of water,  
 Here you must leave me and drift away,  
 Like a loosened water-plant hundreds of miles. . . .  
 I shall think of you in a floating cloud;  
 So in the sunset think of me.<sup>2</sup>  
 . . . We wave our hands to say good-bye,  
 And my horse is neighing again and again.

ON HEARING CHÜN  
 THE BUDDHIST MONK FROM SHU  
 PLAY HIS LUTE

The monk from Shu with his green silk lute-case,  
 Walking west down O-mêi Mountain,  
 Has brought me by one touch of the strings  
 The breath of pines in a thousand valleys.  
 I hear him in the cleansing brook,  
 I hear him in the icy bells;  
 And I feel no change <sup>3</sup> though the mountain darkens  
 And cloudy autumn heaps the sky.

<sup>2</sup> More literally: The sailing clouds understand the traveller's thoughts. The setting sun must go away like parting friends.

<sup>3</sup> Before I know it.

ON CLIMBING IN NAN-KING  
TO THE TERRACE OF PHŒNIXES

Phœnixes that played here once, so that the place was named for them,  
Have abandoned it now to this desolate river;  
The paths of Wu Palace are crooked with weeds;  
The garments<sup>4</sup> of Chin are ancient dust.  
. . . Like this green horizon halving the Three Peaks,  
Like this island of White Egrets dividing the river,  
A cloud has arisen between the Light of Heaven and me,  
To hide his city from my melancholy heart.

DOWN CHUNG-NAN MOUNTAIN  
TO THE KIND PILLOW AND BOWL OF HU SSŪ

Down the blue mountain in the evening,  
Moonlight was my homeward escort.  
Looking back, I saw my path  
Lie in levels of deep shadow . . .  
I was passing the farm-house of a friend,  
When his children called from a gate of thorn  
And led me twining through jade bamboos  
Where green vines caught and held my clothes.  
And I was glad of a chance to rest  
And glad of a chance to drink with my friend. . . .  
We sang to the tune of the wind in the pines;  
And we finished our songs as the stars went down,  
When, I being drunk and my friend more than happy,  
Between us we forgot the world.<sup>5</sup>

DRINKING ALONE WITH THE MOON

From a pot of wine among the flowers  
I drank alone. There was no one with me—  
Till, raising my cup, I asked the bright moon  
To bring me my shadow and make us three.  
Alas, the moon was unable to drink  
And my shadow tagged me vacantly;  
But still for a while I had these friends

<sup>4</sup> The scholar class.

<sup>5</sup> A Taoistic word is used here, hardly translatable: "forgetting the cycle or wheel of life."

To cheer me through the end of spring. . . .  
 I sang. The moon encouraged <sup>6</sup> me.  
 I danced. My shadow tumbled after.  
 As long as I knew, we were boon companions.  
 And then I was drunk, and we lost one another.  
 . . . Shall goodwill ever be secure?  
 I watch the long road of the River of Stars.

### IN SPRING

Your grasses up north are as blue as jade,  
 Our mulberries here curve green-threaded branches;  
 And at last you think of returning home,  
 Now when my heart is almost broken. . . .  
 O breeze of the spring, since I dare not know you,  
 Why part the silk curtains by my bed?

### THE MOON AT THE FORTIFIED PASS

(Written to Music)

The bright moon lifts from the Mountain of Heaven  
 In an infinite haze of cloud and sea,  
 And the wind, that has come a thousand miles,  
 Beats at the Jade Pass battlements. . . .  
 China marches its men down Po-têng Road  
 While Tartar troops peer across blue waters of the bay . . .<sup>7</sup>  
 And since not one battle famous in history  
 Sent all its fighters back again,  
 The soldiers turn round, looking toward the border,  
 And think of home, with wistful eyes,  
 And of those tonight in the upper chambers  
 Who toss and sigh and cannot rest.

### A SONG OF AN AUTUMN MIDNIGHT

(Written to a Su-chou Melody)

A slip of the moon hangs over the capital;  
 Ten thousand washing-mallets are pounding;  
 And the autumn wind is blowing my heart

<sup>6</sup> Paced back and forth.

<sup>7</sup> Really the Chinghai (Blue Waters) Bay

For ever and ever toward the Jade Pass. . . .  
 Oh, when will the Tartar troops be conquered,  
 And my husband come back from the long campaign!

# A SONG OF CH'ANG-KAN

(Written to Music)

My hair had hardly covered my forehead.  
 I<sup>8</sup> was picking flowers, playing by my door,  
 When you, my lover, on a bamboo horse,  
 Came trotting in circles and throwing green plums.  
 We lived near together on a lane in Ch'ang-kan,  
 Both of us young and happy-hearted.  
 . . . At fourteen I became your wife,  
 So bashful that I dared not smile,  
 And I lowered my head toward a dark corner  
 And would not turn to your thousand calls;  
 But at fifteen I straightened my brows and laughed,  
 Learning that no dust could ever seal our love,  
 That even unto death I would await you by my post  
 And would never lose heart in the tower of silent watching.<sup>9</sup>  
 . . . Then when I was sixteen, you left on a long journey  
 Through the Gorges of Ch'ü-t'ang, of rock and whirling water.  
 And then came the Fifth-month, more than I could bear,  
 And I tried to hear the monkeys in your lofty far-off sky.  
 Your footprints by our door, where I had watched you go,  
 Were hidden, every one of them, under green moss,  
 Hidden under moss too deep to sweep away. .  
 And the first autumn wind added fallen leaves.  
 And now, in the Eighth-month, yellowing butterflies  
 Hover, two by two, in our west-garden grasses. . . .  
 And, because of all this, my heart is breaking  
 And I fear for my bright cheeks, lest they fade.  
 . . . Oh, at last, when you return through the three Pa districts,  
 Send me a message home ahead!  
 And I will come and meet you and will never mind the distance,  
 All the way to Chang-fêng Sha.

<sup>8</sup> A female person is speaking.

<sup>9</sup> Allusion to a lover who kept a tryst with his sweetheart under a bridge. He refused to leave his rendezvous when the flood came and his girl still had not appeared. He was drowned. A second allusion to a woman who watched for her husband's return at a particular spot until she turned into stone

## T'IENT-MU MOUNTAIN ASCENDED IN A DREAM

A seafaring visitor will talk about Japan,  
 Which waters and mists conceal beyond approach;  
 But Yüeh people talk about Heavenly Mother Mountain,  
 Still seen through its varying deepnesses of cloud.  
 In a straight line to heaven, its summit enters heaven,  
 Tops the five Holy Peaks, and casts a shadow through China  
 With the hundred-mile length of the Heavenly Terrace Range,  
 Which, just at this point, begins turning southeast.  
 . . . My heart and my dreams are in Wu and Yüeh  
 And they cross Mirror Lake all night in the moon.  
 And the moon lights my shadow  
 And me to Yien River—  
 With the hermitage of Hsieh still there  
 And the monkeys calling clearly over ripples of green water  
 I wear his pegged boots  
 Up a ladder of blue cloud,  
 Sunny ocean half-way,  
 Holy cock-crow in space,  
 Myriad peaks and more valleys and nowhere a road.  
 Flowers lure me, rocks ease me. Day suddenly ends.  
 Bears, dragons, tempestuous on mountain and river,  
 Startle the forest and make the heights tremble.  
 Clouds darken with darkness of rain,  
 Streams pale with pallor of mist.  
 The Gods of Thunder and Lightning  
 Shatter the whole range.  
 The stone gate breaks asunder  
 Venting in the pit of heaven,  
 An impenetrable shadow.  
 . . . But now the sun and moon illumine a gold and silver terrace,  
 And, clad in rainbow garments, riding on the wind,  
 Come the queens of all the clouds, descending one by one,  
 With tigers for their lute-players and phoenixes for dancers.  
 Row upon row, like fields of hemp, range the fairy figures. . . .  
 I move, my soul goes flying,  
 I wake with a long sigh,  
 My pillow and my matting  
 Are the lost clouds I was in.  
 . . . And this is the way it always is with human joy:  
 Ten thousand things run for ever like water toward the east.



And so I take my leave of you, not knowing for how long.  
 . . . But let me, on my green slope, raise a white deer  
 And ride to you, great mountain, when I have need of you.  
 Oh, how can I gravely bow and scrape to men of high rank and men of  
 high office  
 Who never will suffer being shown an honest-hearted face!

### PARTING AT A WINE-SHOP IN NAN-KING

A wind, bringing willow-cotton, sweetens the shop,  
 And a girl from Wu, pouring wine, urges me to share it  
 With my comrades of the city who are here to see me off;  
 And as each of them drains his cup, I say to him in parting,  
 Oh, go and ask this river running to the east  
 If it can travel farther than a friend's love!

### HARD ROADS IN SHU

(Written to Music)

O, but it is high and very dangerous!  
 Such travelling is harder than scaling the blue sky.  
 . . . Until two rulers of this region  
 Pushed their way through in the misty ages,  
 Forty-eight thousand years had passed  
 With nobody arriving across the Ch'in border.  
 And the Great White Mountain, westward, still has only a bird's path <sup>10</sup>  
 Up to the summit of O-mei Peak—  
 Which was broken once by an earthquake and there were brave men  
 lost,  
 Just finishing the stone rungs of their ladder toward heaven.<sup>11</sup>  
 . . . High, as on a tall flag, six dragons drive the sun,  
 While the river, far below, lashes its twisted course.  
 Such height would be hard going for even a yellow crane,  
 So pity the poor monkeys who have only paws to use.  
 The Mountain of Green Clay is formed of many circles—  
 Each hundred steps, we have to turn nine turns among its mounds.  
 Panting, we brush Orion and pass the Well Star,

<sup>10</sup> Mountain trail.

<sup>11</sup> "Only after able-bodied men perished from landslides was the suspended plank-road completed." (A road of planks was laid out on the side of the high cliffs of the Yangtze Gorges, providing entrance to Szechuen. The scene suggests the Burma Road.)

Then, holding our chests with our hands and sinking to the ground with  
 a groan,  
 We wonder if this westward trail will never have an end.  
 The formidable path ahead grows darker, darker still,  
 With nothing heard but the call of birds hemmed in by the ancient forest,  
 Male birds smoothly wheeling, following the females;  
 And there come to us the melancholy voices of the cuckoos  
 Out on the empty mountain, under the lonely moon . . .  
 Such travelling is harder than scaling the blue sky.  
 Even to hear of it turns the cheek pale,  
 With the highest crag barely a foot below heaven.  
 Dry pines hang, head down, from the face of the cliffs,  
 And a thousand plunging cataracts out roar one another  
 And send through ten thousand valleys a thunder of spinning stones.  
 With all this danger upon danger,  
 Why do people come here who live at a safe distance?  
 . . . Though Dagger-Tower Pass be firm and grim,  
 And while one man guards it  
 Ten thousand cannot force it,  
 What if he be not loyal,  
 But a wolf toward his fellows?  
 . . . There are ravenous tigers to fear in the day  
 And venomous reptiles in the night  
 With their teeth and their fangs ready  
 To cut people down like hemp.  
 . . . Though the City of Silk be delectable, I would rather turn home  
 quickly.  
 Such travelling is harder than scaling the blue sky . . .  
 But I still face westward with a dreary moan.

### ENDLESS YEARNING

(Written to Music)

"I am endlessly yearning  
 To be in Ch'ang-an.  
 . . . Insects hum of autumn by the gold brim of the well;  
 A thin frost glistens like little mirrors on my cold mat;  
 The high lantern flickers; and deeper grows my longing.  
 I lift the shade and, with many a sigh, gaze upon the moon,  
 Single as a flower, centred from the clouds.  
 Above, I see the blueness and deepness of sky.

Below, I see the greenness and the restlessness of water . . .  
 Heaven is high, earth wide; bitter between them flies my sorrow.  
 Can I dream through the gateway, over the mountain?  
 Endless longing  
 Breaks my heart."

## BRINGING IN THE WINE

(Written to Music)

See how the Yellow River's waters move out of heaven.  
 Entering the ocean, never to return.  
 See how lovely locks in bright mirrors in high chambers,  
 Though silken-black at morning, have changed by night to snow.  
 . . . Oh, let a man of spirit venture where he pleases  
 And never tip his golden cup empty toward the moon! <sup>12</sup>  
 Since heaven gave the talent, let it be employed!  
 Spin a thousand pieces of silver, all of them come back!  
 Cook a sheep, kill a cow, whet the appetite,  
 And make me, of three hundred bowls, one long drink!  
 . . . To the old master, Ts'ên,  
 And the young scholar, Tan-ch'iu,  
 Bring in the wine!  
 Let your cups never rest!  
 Let me sing you a song!  
 Let your ears attend!  
 What are bell and drum, rare dishes and treasure?  
 Let me be forever drunk and never come to reason!  
 Sober men of olden days and sages are forgotten,  
 And only the great drinkers are famous for all time.  
 . . . Prince Ch'ên paid at a banquet in the Palace of Perfection  
 Ten thousand coins for a cask of wine, with many a laugh and quip.  
 Why say, my host, that your money is gone?  
 Go and buy wine and we'll drink it together!  
 My flower-dappled horse,  
 My furs worth a thousand,  
 Hand them to the boy to exchange for good wine,  
 And we'll drown away the woes of ten thousand generations!

<sup>12</sup> Never let the golden cup wait idly upon the moon.

# The Tale of Meng Chiang

*A "drum story," in five cantos, translated by  
Genevieve Wimsatt*

## PROLOGUE

(To the beat of the drum)

Shrewd the trader, Lü Pu-wei! <sup>1</sup>  
Knowing Time must well repay  
Cost and care, he dare devise  
Schemes to market merchandise  
Rare and strange—beguileful eyes!

Though the greedy hand essay  
"Spring and Autumn's" brush again—  
Daring competition—when  
Discords and confusions rise  
Loathed their records pass away  
Never graved on hearts of men.  
Crime, bequeathed from age to age,  
Carries as its appanage  
Wrongs born of an elder day;  
Cursed through the historic page  
Runs the name that all despise.  
Lü takes on the regal guise  
Rightful to the Line of Ying; <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Real father of Ch'in the First Emperor, the builder of the Great Wall.

<sup>2</sup> Ying is the clan name of the Ch'in rulers.

Kingdoms six devouring,  
 Ch'in is battened great in size.  
 "To make the kingdom firm," Mêng Tzu <sup>3</sup> has said,  
 "Place no dependence upon streams and hills."  
 But Ch'in Shih Huang, first to be heralded  
 As Emperor of one great nation, wills  
 To build the Wall. The white bones of the dead  
 Lie near in heaps, the living flee in dread;

World-wide have tyranny and terror spread;  
 To the Four Seas go streaming such rank ills  
 That even genii weep and demons wail;  
 When books are burned, and lettered men are thrust  
 Alive into the grave, then to the dust  
 Is learning levelled, law and order fail  
 When States are riven and no Rites prevail.

### CANTO I: LEAVING THE VILLAGE

She is a crystal holding Heaven's light  
 And glints of sunny Earth, this Mêng Chiang,  
 The faithful lady of Fan Ch'i Liang.  
 Most steadfast of all those that love the right,  
 Alone she stands; for since her lord was reaved  
 To labour at the Great Long Wall a blight  
 Has lain upon her beauty; she has grieved  
 Until her waist is like the willow wand;  
     On her rouge-rejecting cheek  
     Sorrow fades the colours faint;  
     Left unsleek, her eyebrows speak  
     All of heart-ache, naught of paint.  
 The East Room dream, too fleet, too fond,  
 Fades with the night;  
 The bamboo screen has been hooked up; beyond  
 The Northern Bourn her tranced thought wings its flight  
 To where the wintered sun shows dull and slight.

Wistful, she muses, "Where  
 Is my lord forced to bear  
 The heavy bricks? The scholar is but slim

<sup>3</sup> Same as Mengtse.

And frail—and who will pity him?  
 His strength is slight—and who will spare  
 The student? Is there none to care  
 How we may fare?

Ruthless overseers dare  
 Roar their biddings, crack their thongs;  
 Blows and cursings are his share—  
 Hapless, must he bear these wrongs?

“My lord, why bid your wife’s heart follow you  
 Across the myriad miles? I sit alone  
 And watch the shadows of the lamp imbrue  
 The empty room with gloom. My thoughts pursue  
 The moon-wheel’s downward track. I scan the zone  
 Edging the far sky where white clouds are rifted;  
 The shifting wind has autumn in its tone,  
 And down the ancient highway, drifting, drifting,  
 Red leaves are blown.

“To wait and wait  
 Breaks heart and hope—when will this vigil end?  
 I sigh for him, my lord of bitter fate;  
 When will that sun ascend  
 Shining on his return? Disconsolate,  
 I pledge my life to seek him, though there be  
 Outstretched to sunder us ten thousand *li*!  
 Though downward to the Yellow Springs I fare,<sup>4</sup>  
 Yet, even there,  
 My wish fulfilled may follow me.”  
 Despite her little bow-shaped shoes,<sup>5</sup> despite  
 Her tiny hose, her small teeth gleaming white,  
 Her shapely brows, this lady’s soul is bright  
 As gold and chrysolite,  
 Like iron is her heart.  
 A gown of cotton for her wear,  
 A paltry pin thrust in her hair,  
 Her charmfulness and graces furred,  
 She goes through blowing wind and dripping rain,  
 And under moonbeams falling on the world  
 Slantwise and sinister. Alone to dare

<sup>4</sup> To the grave.

<sup>5</sup> Evidently an anachronism for those days, accepted by the average Chinese audience.

The road affrights her heart; yet not in vain  
 Has she been urgent to prepare  
 Warm clothing for Fan Ch'i Liang to wear  
 In winter. Neither loyalty nor gain  
 Will tempt a runner to the drear campaign  
 Where stands the wall; but she herself will bear  
 The bundle on her back!

Ahead she sees

The falling, withered leaves, the frosted trees—  
 Suddenly cold and cutting veers the breeze!  
     Maples by the river's edge . . .  
     From the hut of fisher folk  
     Lonely curls the evening smoke . . .  
     Flocking wild geese in a wedge.  
     Sink obliquely toward the sedge . . .  
 Broad, broad the sky—where is he now forlorn?  
 Wide, wide the earth, and one alone must mourn.

With willow waist and downcast almond eyes,  
 Delicate, diffident, she treads the way  
 With lily steps, on aching feet; her gay  
 Kingfisher<sup>6</sup> sleeves are useless when she tries  
 To screen her powdered face from dust and grit;  
 Too sorrowful to lift her bright attire,  
 She lets her girdle drag through mud and mire,  
 Locking her brows in pain; her bundles weigh  
 Heavy and heavier as bit by bit  
 Her strength is spent.

Ah, Lady, thus to rain  
 Tears to the wind but wounds the heart in vain!

She sighs, "Hs-s-s-si, High Heaven, on what day  
 Shall he again behold his native land?  
 Departing for the Wall he cautioned me,  
 "The time of my returning needs must be  
 Uncertain. The Imperial Decree,  
 The Royal Messenger's command,  
 Who dares resist? Ai! Ai! Once I am dead,  
 And my white bones cast out upon the sand,  
 Never again may we rest head by head  
 On the same pillow, like the mated birds

<sup>6</sup> Embroidered with kingfisher feather.

Flying in pairs! O True Wife, heed my words;  
 Never oppose what you can not withstand;  
 Credit no dream that once again may shine  
 The shattered mirror!<sup>7</sup> Do not be misled  
 To think this petty property of mine  
 Could keep you. Do not bring to naught  
 The bright hopes of your spring! Your own forethought  
 Will tell you I perhaps shall find it hard  
 To come again.

“My Lord, your words were fraught  
 With pity; yet recall what kind of wife  
 Was yours in quiet days of wedded life.  
 Have you forgot our heart-to-heartedness,  
 Matching like fish and water?<sup>8</sup> Why regard  
 Your mate as dust and ashes? Tireless  
 The hot blood surges in my breast; unmarred  
 My clear heart is a sceptre of pure jade.  
 Knowing my purpose good I dare rely  
 Upon my strength. With constancy to aid  
 Even the heart of Heaven may be swayed.

I, when I was small and young,  
 From my honoured father heard  
 Precepts, and still heed the word  
 Of the parent-mentor's tongue;  
 Ever has my heart preferred  
 Principles correct and straight;  
 Furthermore, my lord conferred  
 Precious counsels on his mate.

How should I venture now to turn my back  
 On admonitions of a learned sire,  
 Forget a husband's exhortations, slack  
 The duty that both need and right require?  
 “Therefore, not by ten thousand *li* deterred,  
 Seeking my lord I take the track  
 That leads to distant boundaries.”

## CANTO II: IN THE DREAM

“Even the crackle of a falling leaf  
 Affrights the heart made timorous by grief!”

<sup>7</sup> Symbol of separation of husband and wife.

<sup>8</sup> Symbol of marital happiness.



"Soon the autumn wind will send  
 Sun-rays slanting toward the west—  
 In the shelter of what home  
 Shall this way-worn body rest?  
 In the marshes where I roam,  
 In this alien Land-of-others,  
 Are there fathers? Are there mothers?  
 Far and wide the dried grass smothers  
 All the landscape; 'neath a sky  
 Darkly frigid, here am I!

Back to the village copse the ravens fly,  
 Dotting the dusk and chattering on high;  
 How should this timid one be undismayed  
 Facing the road where twilight shadows lie?

Hark! Again, again the knell

Sounding from a distant bell!

Ahead, perhaps, some hamlet site is near;  
 I hasten onward toward the peal I hear,  
 And glimpse a spot of lamplight in the glade!"  
 In haste the lady wipes away a tear,  
 And walks into the forest where the shade  
 Is darkest. In the gloomy depths appear  
 A rustic temple and a tiny shrine  
 Built to Lung Wang, the Dragon King.<sup>9</sup>  
 She asks herself, "What if I laid  
 Myself beneath the Lung Wang's sheltering  
 Table of sacrifice to pass the night . . .  
 Only a flake of body now is mine,  
 Wasted so thin and slight  
 That none would note it there . . .

Often before

I have drunk water from the forest spring  
 To quench my thirst; but now no store  
 Of food in earthen vessels could I bring  
 Along with me, and how shall I be fed?"

Without surcease the lady's tears are shed;  
 Before the holy place of worshipping  
 She makes her k'o t'ous,<sup>10</sup> while her prayers implore:

<sup>9</sup> The King of the Sea.

<sup>10</sup> Kowtow, or kotow.

"O Dragon King, look down with grace  
 On Mêng Chiang, and pardon her  
 That she profanes your holy place,  
 Misfortune-driven traveller,  
 Hiding from the wind and frost!"

She drops her bundle to accost  
 The god; then from the stones embossed  
 With mould of ages sweeps a space,  
 And in the altar's cold embrace  
 Clenching her teeth, shutting her almond eyes,  
 Herself as cold as ice, she lies.

The autumn night winds penetrate her dress  
 In waves; lifting her head the lady spies  
 The hooked moon hanging slantwise in the skies;  
 The bright rays fall upon her dress like rime.  
 Toward the Cold Mansion of the Moon Goddess  
 Mêng Chiang Nü sighs her distress:

"Ai, Ch'ang-O, fair Lunar Queen,  
 Why are you thus pitiless  
 Toward your humble votaress?  
 Spacious Heaven knows your light,  
 On the Myriad Things your sheen  
 Falls in glory, silver white;  
 Clean and cold your beams make bright  
 Earth's ten corners; distant are  
 Both celestial and terrene  
 Frontiers, yet these feet are less  
 Than three inches; long and far  
 Winds the road, yet must this slight  
 Body trail its endlessness.

I plead the holy plea, bestow a dream  
 On my Beloved to bring him cheer  
 (Clothes, too, to keep him warm in those extreme  
 North wilds where frost falls most severe),  
 Compassionate the last branch of the tree  
 Left sere and drear!  
 And pity me,  
 Mêng Chiang Nü, toiling ten thousand *li*!  
 Though this small wife not twice ten years has faced  
 The dusty, windy world, yet see

The shades that nest within her breast,  
And on her cheeks the tracks the tears have traced!"

No sooner does the lady drowse  
Than down a stretch of darkness she is led  
Into the Land of Dreams.

Here is a man with knitted brows,  
Holding his grief in check—tears in his eyes—  
His body covered with a rotting shred  
Of cloth—racked with despair he seems.

Sadly he bows his head  
Before the lady as he sighs,  
"Ah, Wife, do you not know Fan Ch'i Liang?  
Searching for me you have not winced to tread  
Ten thousand *li*. Now only in this wise,  
With shattered bones, with body broke and dead  
Your lord indemnifies  
The toils and hardships of his Mêng Chiang!"

The dreamer in the dream replies,  
"Ah, Husband, you have come!" She laughs and cries  
And calls, "My Lord! My Lord . . ." She springs to press  
Closer her greeting—"Lord, all happiness!"  
"Already from the plum blossoms the sounds of autumn call;  
Already on the lattice silk athwart the moon-beams fall. . . ."

Startled, the lady wakes. All overhead  
Cluster the stars, upon the earth is spread  
The hoarfrost. She recalls the dream departed  
And muses, "This can not but make me dread  
Some great misfortune! In the dream he said  
The fragments of his bones, his body's dust  
Should be my compensation, so I must  
Ponder this vision all but broken-hearted . . .

"Perhaps, over wide waters and high hills  
This dream has travelled joltingly, and thus  
Its contents were inverted, goods and ills . . .  
A dream is only what the dreamer wills,"  
She solaces herself. "My vagrant thought  
Was masterless . . . Ah, is it fate

That I should seek my mate  
 Beneath the earth? If destiny has wrought  
 This condemnation, how can I do aught  
 But meet the doom? Yet let one hope abide—  
 At last to rest me by my husband's side!  
 Now am I fearful lest without avail  
 I perish half way on the road and fail  
 To meet my lord. Hsi! Hsi! that I am frail  
 And soft as water! At the midnight hour  
 Empty and shaking in the dark I cower  
 Beneath the altar stone."

The sky is pale  
 Before the rising sun, the frost-touched vale  
 Is damp, the ravens from the tree tops flit,  
 And orioles begin to dart and twit  
 Along the ancient way.

The lady rises with the dawn to say  
 Adieu to each and every little Kuei <sup>11</sup>  
 Guarding the shrine. Before the Dragon King  
 She lifts her eyes and kneels to pray.  
 Her jade-fine fingers fix the covering  
 About the bundle; in her heart is strife  
 Of hope and sorrow; bowed beneath her load  
 She sighs.

"Of all the ills that here are rife  
 To journey with no goal is first and worst—  
 Yet, even this, the utmost ill of life,  
 Attests the unity of man and wife."

### CANTO III: OVERNIGHT AT THE INN

"Rustling sounds of early fall . . .  
 Down the ancient highway brawl  
 Whirling leaf and dusty squall . . ."

From her locked brows the paint is blown,  
 The rouge is rifled from her face,  
 Her tender breast at night has known

<sup>11</sup> Earthly spirit.

The soaking dew; with swaying grace  
She wavers in the wind's embrace.

"Where are you now, my lord, alive, or dead?  
Not knowing this I can not rightly know  
Toward what end I should strive.  
I dream that on my brows I still can feel  
The paint strokes that you sketched there long ago <sup>12</sup> . . .  
We two have played the harp amid the flowers  
In the serenity of moon-lit hours  
Heralding autumn's coming. . . . Now I go  
Toward the Long Wall . . . and will the end reveal  
My Lord? Stark desolation lowers  
Along the road I tread, wishing in vain  
That you might come to share the evening meal . . .  
Perhaps, never again  
Shall we two steal  
Together up the stairs. . . .

Hsi, hsi! What crime,

My lord, did you commit in that dim time  
Before your birth that we must bear this woe?  
I sigh, and rub my bruised soles where the pain  
Is sharpest. Now am I  
Like the small floweret, yellow, dry. . . .

"When, suddenly, the gusts of autumn blow,  
Against my shoulders, red, red leaves are whirled:  
The saddest spot, perhaps, in all the world  
Is but the pathway where few footprints show.  
Deep in these woods, from maple tree and oak  
Thick falling leaves darken the air like smoke;  
Sometimes I pass a newly rifled tomb;  
Sometimes, dark footprints on the frosted bridge  
Spanning the freshet's spume;  
Sometimes I see the cock perched on the ridge  
A-top the rush-thatched inn and hear him crow,  
While in the moonlight of the court below  
The watch dogs bark before the wattled door;  
Sometimes the blackbirds to the tree tops soar . . .  
Over these scenes of solitude I pore,  
And one by one they fill my heart with gloom."

<sup>12</sup> Allusion to a scholar who painted her eyebrows for his bride.

The sun has reached its high meridian,  
 And still the lady has not broken fast;  
 Early or late, she knows, the traveller can  
 Get porridge at the village inn. At last  
 She finds a hostel where the holder's clan  
 Is dwelling. Here the Good Dame of the inn  
 Notes that although the lady's travelling gear  
 Is scant and poor, yet is her air  
 Gentle and elegant.

She asks, "What fare,  
 A meal or less, would you be served with here?"

The guest replies, "Only what you prepare  
 For every day, rice gruel from the pot,  
 That is enough."

She eats a frugal share  
 Of congee, then, revived, she starts to blot  
 And pat the moisture from her peach bloom cheeks  
 And willow brows with every winsome phase  
 Of charm, and myriad shy, engaging ways.

Watching her lovely guest the hostess speaks,  
 "What a fine lady! There's nobility  
 About her, though there's trouble in her gaze."

She questions, "Gentle Lady, tell me where  
 You come from, tell me where you think to go."

Mêng Chiang Nü sighs as the tear drops flow,  
 "The Long Wall is our endless enemy!  
 To labour at its building did they tear  
 My husband from his home. My heart has striven  
 Toward him in vain across ten thousand *li*,  
 To barren hill tops have my tears been given!  
     Boundary wind and winter snow  
     Chill the world; the thin smoke driven  
     By the tempest to and fro  
     Saps the sun's enfeebled glow;  
     Laden, toward my lord I go—  
     Bearing bundles dulls the woe—  
     Plodding onward fagged and slow  
     Numbs the heart by sorrow riven.

As, when the stream runs dry the rocks appear,  
 So, at the journey's end, when I draw near  
 The Great Long Wall my heart shall be at rest.  
 Yet, even this, the uncompleted quest,  
 Is better than the aching, breaking heart,  
 The shedding of the futile, bloody tear!"

"Nonsense!" the Good Dame says. "Let be! Let be!  
 How tramp a thousand—nay, ten thousand *li*!  
 The eighth and ninth months shift the seasons cold.  
 One body small, one pair of tiny feet,  
 While in the mountains lurk the bandits bold,  
 And everywhere there's crime and knavery!  
 The wind blows straight south-west. Lady, behold,  
 You face north-east. Your journey was begun  
 When summer smiled, but now the autumn's done.  
 These facts have force to wake the sympathy  
 Of mere on-lookers, Lady, have they none  
 To wake your fears? Wherever there may be  
 A comely woman, who will guarantee  
 There'll spring no brigand armed with club and knife?"

The pilgrim answers, "Sages all agree  
 That of the Five Relations of this life  
 Foremost is that between the Man and Wife.  
 This is, for womankind, the only one  
 To hold, the other four are not our care.  
 I have received with glad humility  
 Your kind instructions, and I am aware  
 Of all these perils. Yet, caught in the snare  
 Of this hard enterprise, my foolish heart  
 Can rest no more in quiet. I depart  
 Determined that there shall be no returning  
 (Although our meeting be beneath the ground!)  
 Until the silken strand of love shall wind  
 To rest upon the paired Teals' <sup>13</sup> burial mound,  
 Or on the high crests of the Fir Trees yearning  
 Together with their branches intertwined." <sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Usually translated as "mandarin ducks" who swim in pairs and are the symbol of marital happiness.

<sup>14</sup> The two trees with intertwined branches, also a symbol of union between lovers.

The hostess, shaken by the lady's pain  
 Let her lips quiver and her tear drops rain  
 To see such piteous courage.

“Ai!” she sobs,  
 “For you and your mishaps my old heart throbs!  
 To change the past, whatever can we do?  
 You must not go! You cannot well remain!  
 I'd like to venture this old frame of mine,  
 Could it avail, to come along with you!  
 For though it, also, is but weak, yet two  
 Are better than one lady all alone.”

Mêng Chiang draws a long and trembling breath,  
 And answers, “Should I dare to be the death  
 Of one so venerable who has shown  
 Me kindness? Such an act would ill accord  
 With the Proprieties! My heart shall hoard  
 Your mother-fondness. On some other day  
 When I return from searching for my lord,  
 All this shall I repay.”

The Good Dame, seeing nothing can be done  
 To change the lady's purpose, goes to spread  
 Mats for the resting place;  
 Then these two light the lamp, and face to face  
 Sit talking on and on.

Ah, from the shed  
 The rooster crows in protest at delay!  
 The night-watch drums with dawn are quieted;  
 Taking her bundle, making no more stay  
 For rest, the lady hastens on her way.

#### CANTO IV: SIGHS ON THE ROAD

Gustily the night winds sigh,  
 Dawn is near,  
 Fresh and magical and clear;  
 Fallen leaves  
 Frolic over hill and mere;  
     Dense dew cleaves  
 Glistening to the grasses dry;



Stars appear  
 Lustreless against the sky;  
     Through the high  
 Boughs of trees the sun-beams strike:  
     Wanders here  
 Mêng Chiang, the pilgrim fair,  
     Treading where  
 Prints of human feet are rare.  
     From the West  
 Blows the wind her shadow-like  
     Form must breast;  
 Tinged with blood her tears are shed  
     Jewel-red;  
 Up the rocky road must tread  
     Feet that wear  
 Shoes embroidered and compressed—  
     Where to rest?  
 In her bones aching is bred;  
     Hsi! Hsi! Hsi!  
 Like the faded yellow bloom  
     Presently  
 She must meet the autumn doom.  
     How to bear  
 Killing cold, and not despair?  
     How to dare  
 Cutting blasts of winter blown  
     To the bone?

Her tiny feet traverse the icy zone,  
 Daunted by winter's wrath she is alone  
 Like the thin rush left shaking in the breeze.  
     Heavy-hearted, in a daze,  
     Staring down that road of sighs,  
     There she sees before her eyes  
     Myriad mountain peaks arise  
     Purple in the distant haze.

"Oh, Highest Heaven," Mêng Chiang makes moan,  
 "My heart is breaking, and who hears my pleas?  
 Who listens to my prayer when I complain  
 At this embitterment of heart and brain?  
 Where is the Great Long Wall?"

At length,

Her eyes still stinging from the squall,  
 She girds her strength  
 And mounts the lifting *li* that crawl  
 Over the mountains, asking all  
 She meets for tidings of her lord.

Just now at Shan Hai Kuan,<sup>15</sup> peasants advise,  
 The Long Wall builders push the work abhorred.

Glad hope and newborn cheer suffuse  
 The lady's heart at this good news.  
 "Then, right ahead my high-road lies!  
 If once again I see his face  
 The hardships of this enterprise  
 Will vanish from my mind without a trace!"

Now turn to this, mark how Ch'in Shih Huang Ti  
 To guard the nation builds the Great Long Wall,  
 And orders Mêng T'ien to oversee  
 The work for speediest accomplishment.  
 The people's wealth is drained and spent,  
 Their strength is taxed, their energy  
 Is sapped, the marrow of their bones  
 Is sucked; ground down by heavy toil they die.

Over high mountain peaks the masses haul  
 Water, and up the steep ascent  
 Panting, they drag the heavy stones.  
 They clamber over cliff and crag—  
 Even by star-and-moonlight who dares lag?  
 The corpses of the labourers that fall  
 Are flung into the Wall, the bones of men  
 Dead from hard work are piled up mountain-tall  
 Along the way.

Up to the Jasper River <sup>16</sup>  
 Rises the breath of bitter discontent;  
 A shiver shakes the earth, the Heavens quiver  
 Hearing the loud lament.

<sup>15</sup> The eastern end of the Great Wall, north-east of Tientsin, where the Great Wall  
 into the sea.

<sup>16</sup> The Milky Way.

Holds spirit money.<sup>17</sup>

"Surely, there's a chance  
They know him! Why should I not ask their aid?"  
Mêng Chiang Nü hastens her shy advance  
Meeting the group, and crying, "Sirs, please wait  
A moment!"

Now the workers check their gait,  
Hailing the stranger with sedate  
Greetings. They see that though her glance  
Is modest, yet her spirit is depressed;  
That though her cotton skirt is torn,  
Her clothing dusty, and rude pins of thorn  
Fasten her hair, yet here is manifest  
The stamp of one well bred and nobly born—  
She is a crystal holding Heaven's light,  
With beauty graced, with gentle virtues blessed.  
The lady asks, "Among the men impressed  
To labour here where hill and sea unite,  
Sirs, does Fan Ch'i Liang toil with the rest?  
He is my husband."

Moved, the masons say,  
"It is for him that we have come today!  
Because our brother Fan was young and slight,  
And unaccustomed to the fag and moil  
Of heavy labour he has died from toil.  
And since we fellow workers could not bear  
To leave his corpse exposed to sun and air,  
In the Long Wall we buried him by night.

"Now, at Mid-Autumn when the builders share  
A feast, we come with simple rite  
To burn our paper money, and attest  
Our friendship."

While the labourers recite  
Their tale, they see the lady's form recoil  
And drop, her almond eyes close in despair.

## CANTO V: RECOGNIZING THE BONES

"Parting from loved ones most embitters life . . .  
Close is the bond uniting man and wife."

<sup>17</sup> Paper money burnt for the use of the deceased in the underworld

Once Mêng Chiang hears that her lord is dead,  
To the Nine Heavens ranged beyond the skies  
Torn from her breast her ravaged spirit flies.

"Like the frail flower that the marchers tread,  
Like the pale moon by clouds discomfited . . ."

From choking throat break forth her stifled cries;  
She screams, "Ah, Husband!" careless of the eyes  
Regarding her, benumbed and stupefied  
She crumbles to the ground; senseless she lies  
Her eyes wide open fixed against the light,  
Staring, her peach-like mouth drooping and wryed,  
Her red lips silver white.

She stirs, she moans, "Hsi, I am slain!  
Why should High Heaven thus requite  
The good? My lord was careful to observe  
All the Proprieties; there was no Rite  
Ignored by him; learned, he could explain  
The Classics; dutiful, he did not swerve  
From Righteousness; he studied to attain  
To moral excellence, and was resigned  
To follow all that Heaven should ordain.  
He knew the Sacred Books and could define  
Their teachings. Many are the hearts that yearn  
To see Fan Ch'i Liang return  
To glorify his name. Who knows that he  
Is vanished like a stone tossed in the sea,  
Not to be seen, not to be heard again?

"The rest house on the long road where we parted,  
His earnest words, his last farewell to me  
That might have moved the stony-hearted,  
Can I forget? My lord, did you not say,  
'Husband and wife, like wood birds flying free,  
Are paired; yet when the day  
Of doom has come they, too, must separate.  
Do I not wish that man might be  
Ever triumphant, woman dear?  
That bonds of married unity

Might never warp or terminate?  
 Ai! Ai! In what forgotten sphere  
 Were sinned those sins which antedate  
 And mold the punishments which here  
 We blindly bear to expiate  
 Old crimes? What man can conquer Fate?  
 From the Long Wall there is no track  
 By which the builder may come back.  
 We two, I think, shall meet no more,  
 Except in as the fortunate  
 Dream of the Duke of Chou of yore.'

"Now are fulfilled the words you spoke afore!  
 You have met misadventures strange and sore!  
 To what horizons desolate  
 Have you called for me to commiserate  
 Your lonely soul?  
 I only know that wide and great  
 Stretches an empty universe; I dare  
 Not turn to look behind; before me where  
 Is there a home? No path leads on ahead;  
 There is no roadway back, only one gate  
 Opens to me . . .

He-s-s-si! when I am dead  
 There is no fear but that the pallid dust  
 Of my blanched bones, unburied, will be whirled  
 By aimless winds across the world!"  
 The workmen, hearing Mêng Chiang lament,  
 Seeing her cry as though her heart would break,  
 Press forward, urging, "Lady, only take  
 A little rest, and cease your bitter weeping!"  
 Quickly the lady stills the turbulent  
 Outburst of grief, and thanks the builders, keeping  
 Her tears in check.

"The grace that you have shown  
 In burying my husband shall be scored  
 Upon my heart as though engraved on bone.  
 My words are weak, my woman's strength is spent . . .  
 Sirs, tell me where my husband lies alone  
 That I may seek his grave."

With one accord  
 The workers weep, and say, "Lady, we, too,

Will go along and at the grave bemoan  
Our brother's spirit and condole with you."

Mêng Chiang Nü fastens the rain cloth straight  
About the pack, shoulders the heavy weight,  
And follows. As late autumn floods break through,  
Wrecking their channels, so her tears are poured,  
Breaking her heart.

Soon there beyond the Pass  
Along the coast she sees the rolling mass  
Of waters swirl itself against the blue  
Clouds to the very roof of Heaven soared.

Wall and Eastern Sea unite  
At the shore; a thousand times  
On the grisly ramp that climbs  
Unresisted to the height,  
Parapet repeats the threat  
Caught from farther parapet.

Here bricks are piled, and ashes strew the ground,  
Over the dreary scene the rude winds fling  
Deep dust, sweeping the acrid smoke to stin;  
The eyes; bleak winter's glacial blasts confound  
The soul.

Mêng Chiang Nü cries, shuddering,  
"This deadly cold! What mortal could endure  
The rigors of this plain? On the bleak moor  
My husband's body lies beneath a mound  
Of yellow earth amid the autumn wood!"  
Then to the group her eyes in question cling—  
"But here, in this abandoned, barren space,"  
She puzzles, "Sirs, there is no sign or trace  
Of any grave . . ."

They answer, as sighs wring  
Their hearts, "Lady, let it be understood  
This is Imperial Ground, a seizin place  
Held by the Reigning House; who would—who could—  
Dare raise a burial mound? Here at the base  
Of the Long Wall our brother's body lies.  
Moved by our sense of common brotherhood,  
We have devoted to his memory  
A three-foot stone, white, bearing on its face  
Your husband's now-immortal name to be

His tomb-tablet."

The workers point, "Here, see,  
Just at this stone!"

The lady bends above  
The slab sunk at the Wall, whereon a name  
That neither sun nor wind can quite erase,  
Nor grinding dust, shows mistily.

Mêng Chiang's heart burns with her baffled love  
Like straw devoured by flame;  
Against the Wall she beats her wasted frame,  
Crying,

"Ah, Husband, whither strays  
Your orphaned spirit? Now for whom  
Has your small wife embraced the doom  
Of homelessness, and all these days  
Travelled the myriad-*li*-long ways?  
Despite the distance and the gloom,  
This foolish-hearted one has clung  
To the fond hope that through the maze  
She still might find her lord among  
The living. Now the wild grass plume  
Flickers its shadow on your tomb—  
Like sunken pearl, like shattered jade,  
You perish, leaving me to gaze  
Upon a moon that mists consume,  
Swift-sinking stars that dull and fade,  
Clouds that the winds have rent and frayed!  
My world forever and forever  
Is but a lotus-pod adrift—  
Though Fate itself had willed this gift  
Of meeting, now it could be—never!"

Mêng Chiang's love and fervent purpose rise  
Straight from the earth and pierce the very skies!  
Ai, of a truth, such constancy can sway  
The Heavens, and move even Shên and Kuei.<sup>18</sup>  
This lady, searching for her husband's bones,  
Cries, and the Wall is riven, earth and stones!

<sup>18</sup> *Shên*, the celestial spirits; *Kuei*, the earthly spirits.

Startled, the Wall Official makes report  
Of this event to the Imperial Court.  
The Son of Heaven, Shih Huang Ti elects  
The lady for his palace!

She rejects  
The summons! Claspings to her faithful breast  
Her husband's bones, she stands upon the crest  
Of the Long Wall—a leap a flash, and she  
Is lost forever in the Eastern Sea!

Now Shih Huang Ti approves her constancy,  
And issues an Imperial Decree  
For rites and ceremonies in her name,  
Ordering that a temple to her fame  
Be built close by the wall beyond the Portal—  
The lady, Mêng Chiang, is an Immortal!



# The Mortal Thoughts of a Nun

*Translated from a popular drama by Lin Yutang*

A young nun am I, sixteen years of age;  
My head was shaven in my young maidenhood.

For my father, he loves the Buddhist sutras,  
And my mother, she loves the Buddhist priests.

Morning and night, morning and night,  
I burn incense and I pray, for I  
Was born a sickly child, full of ills.  
So they sent me here into this monastery.

Amitabha! Amitabha!

Unceasingly I pray.

Oh, tired am I of the humming of the drums and the tinkling of the  
bells;

Tired am I of the droning of the prayers and the crooning of the priors;  
The chatter and the clatter of unintelligible charms,  
The clamour and the clangour of interminable chants,  
The mumbling and the murmuring of monotonous psalms.  
Prajnaparamita, Mayura-sutra,

Saddharmapundarika—

Oh, how I hate them all!

While I say Mitabha,  
I sigh for my beau.

While I chant saparah,  
My heart cries, "Oh!"  
While I sing tarata,  
My heart palpitates sol

Ah, let me take a stroll,  
Let me take a stroll!

*(She comes to the Hall of the Five Hundred Lohans, or Arahats, Buddhist saints, who are known for their distinctive facial expressions.)*

Ah, here are the Lohan,  
What a bunch of silly, amorous souls!  
Every one a bearded man!  
How each his eyes at me rolls!

Look at the one hugging his knees!  
His lips are mumbling my name so!  
And the one with his cheek in his hand,  
As though thinking of me so!  
That one has a pair of dreamy eyes,  
Dreaming dreams of me so!

But the Lohan in sackcloth!  
What is he after,  
With his hellish, heathenish laughter?  
With his roaring, rollicking laughter,  
Laughing at me so!  
—Laughing at me, for  
When beauty is past and youth is lost,  
Who will marry an old crone?  
When beauty is faded and youth is jaded,  
Who will marry an old, shrivelled cocoon?

The one holding a dragon,  
He is cynical;  
The one riding a tiger,  
He is quizzical;  
And that long-browed handsome giant,  
He seems pitiful,  
For what will become of me when my beauty is gone?

These candles of the altar,  
    They are not for my bridal chamber.  
These long incense-containers,  
    They are not for my bridal parlour.  
And the straw prayer-cushions,  
    They cannot serve as quilt or cover.

Oh, God!  
Whence comes this burning, suffocating ardour?  
    Whence comes this strange, infernal, unearthly ardour?  
I'll tear these monkish robes!  
    I'll bury all the Buddhist sutras;  
I'll drown the wooden fish,  
    And leave all the monastic putras!

I'll leave the drums,  
    I'll leave the bells,  
        And the chants,  
        And the yells,  
And all the interminable, exasperating, religious chatter!  
I'll go downhill, and find me a young and handsome lover—  
Let him scold me, beat me!  
    Kick or ill-treat me!  
I will *not* become a Buddha!  
I will *not* mumble mita, prajna, para!

SKETCHES OF  
CHINESE  
LIFE



# Chinese Tales

## INTRODUCTION

THE DIFFERENCE between China and the modern world that we call Western is that in the West children believe in fairies while in China the adults do so. The capacity for belief is what the modern world has lost on the whole, to our advantage or disadvantage no one can say. Shakespeare believed in a lot of things that we wise prophets of the latter days do not. But we terribly misjudge when we project our idea of verifiable truth and confuse it with poetic truth or the truth of imagination. Our whole attitude toward truth has been vitiated by our scientific training and we can no longer be interested in a truth that cannot pull a locomotive or work a steam shovel. What we have lost is fancy, or that pleasurable borderland between truth and fiction, where the two merge and it becomes unimportant which is which. That is why we can no longer produce the great myths that were associated with religion; the self-conscious mind of the modern man has lost its simple naïveté. But this difference is no longer between Eastern and Western; it is a difference between this scientific age and all previous ages of all countries. Man did delight in fairies before the nineteenth century, except for a few staid, rationalist souls like Voltaire and Wang Ch'ung.

Consequently, Chinese literature abounds in tales of ghosts, goblins, fox spirits, genii and double personalities. Such stories may be read in Herbert A. Giles' *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (Boni and Liveright). The best collection of Chinese short stories is *Chinku Ch'ikuan*, eleven of which have been excellently translated by E. Butts Howell (*Inconstancy of Madame Chuang* and *The Restitution of the Bride*, Brentano). These are longer stories and show a higher development of the story-teller's art. It is needless to say that the vast fund of Chinese stories has scarcely been touched.

In the present selection, I have chosen a few shorter ones that are

either typical or have some special significance. The first two stories of judgments are interesting as showing resemblance to a biblical story. "The Chinese Cinderella" should be interesting to students of folk-lore. "The Tale of Ch'ienniang" is typical of those weird tales wherein a man's spirit can depart from its body. The next two are early tales of the fourth century with a peculiar droll humour, typical of the period. "The Brothers' Search for Their Father" and "The Private History of Queen Feiyen" are strictly true stories and belong to history rather than fiction. I have chosen them because they are "curious" from the Western point of view, but are strictly authentic. Like the "Six Chapters of a Floating Life," they may be regarded as documents affording real glimpses into Chinese life. All these stories have never been translated into English before, except "The Tale of Ch'ienniang," which was included in *My Country and My People*. Of course, I have not included Chinese jokes and humorous stories which form something of a dessert by themselves.

seemed the baby was being torn to pieces and neither would give it up. The baby was crying desperately, and the mother was afraid he might be hurt and let him go. The elder woman was very pleased, while the younger woman looked very sorrowful. Then Huang Pa declared, "It is the younger one's child." He indicted the elder woman and she was indeed found guilty.

### THE JUDGMENT OF A DISPUTE

(From *Fengshu'ung*, Second Century)

At Linhuai, a silk merchant was carrying a piece of waterproof silk to the city for sale. There came a rain and he spread it over his head for shelter, and soon another man came to stand under it. When the rain had stopped, both of them claimed that the silk was his own. The Chief Minister Hsüeh Hsüan said, "This piece of waterproof silk is only worth several hundred cash. Why fight over it?" Thereupon he cut it in two and gave each one half. As he continued to watch them, he saw the owner was protesting that he had been wronged, while the other man seemed well satisfied. And so he knew to which one the silk rightfully belonged, and the other man was found guilty and punished.

### THE CHINESE CINDERELLA

(From *Yuyang Tsatsu*, Ninth Century)

(This is the earliest-known Cinderella story in writing in the world. The Cinderella story is one of most widespread folk tales in the world, and hundreds of versions have been collected and studied and compared by scholars.<sup>4</sup> However, according to Professor R. D. Jameson, an authority on this topic in the Far East, who has kindly corresponded with me on the subject, "It [the version here] antedates the earliest Western version by Des Perriers in his *Nouvelles Récréations et Joieux Devis*, Lyon, 1558, by some 700 years." The Chinese version is from *Yuyang Tsatsu*, a book of weird, supernatural tales as well as historical learning, written by Tuan Ch'eng-shih, who died in A.D. 863. The story was told him by an old servant of his family who was from Yungchow [modern Nanning] in Kwangsi, and who came from the cave people [aborigines] of that district. Tuan was a premier's son and a scholar, and in *Yuyang Tsatsu*, in several instances, he traced certain Chinese folk tales to Buddhist classics, for in the ninth century Buddhist supernatural stories were well known and popular in China. However, this story was stated to have come first hand from an oral tradition. There are well-known Siamese versions of the

<sup>4</sup> Marion Rolfe Cox, *Cinderella, Three Hundred and Forty-five Variants* (London, Folklore Society, 1893).



Cinderella story, and Nanning is very close to Indo-China. In response to my inquiry whether this version could have come from India, Professor Jameson said, "So far as my evidence goes, at least, the oldest version in print is Chinese. We know far too little of the process of the human imagination and far too many spots on the folkloristic map of Asia are entirely unexplored to justify, it seems to me, too much speculation." The striking thing about this Chinese version is that it contains the elements of both the Slavonic tradition, where an animal friend is an important feature, and the Germanic tradition, where the loss of the slipper at a ball is the important feature. The cruel stepmother and stepsisters are common to both.—*Ed.*)

Once, before the time of Ch'in<sup>5</sup> and Han there was a chief of a mountain cave whom the natives called Cave Chief Wu. He married two women, one of whom died leaving him a baby girl named Yeh Hsien. She was very intelligent and clever at working on gold and her father loved her dearly, but when he died she was maltreated by her stepmother, who often forced her to cut wood and sent her to dangerous places to draw water from deep wells.

One day, Yeh Hsien caught a fish more than two inches long with red fins and golden eyes and she brought it home and placed it in a basin of water. Every day it grew larger and larger until finally the bowl wouldn't hold it at all, and she placed it in the pond back of her home. Yeh Hsien used to feed it with what she had saved from her own food. When she came to the pond, the fish would rise to the surface and pillow its head on the bank, but if anyone else came to the water's edge it would never appear.

This curious behaviour was noticed by the stepmother and she waited for the fish, but the latter would never come up. One day she resorted to a ruse and said to the girl, "Aren't you tired from work? I will give you a new jacket." Then she made Yeh Hsien take off her old clothing, and sent her off to a distance of several hundred *li* to draw water from another well. The mother then put on Yeh Hsien's dress, and hiding a sharp knife in her sleeve, went towards the pond and called to the fish. When the fish put its head out of the water, she killed it. The fish was by that time already over ten feet long, and when it was cooked, it tasted so many times better than other fish. And the mother buried its bones in a dunghill.

Next day, Yeh Hsien came back, and when she approached the pond she found the fish had vanished. Thereupon she wept in the wilds, when a man with dishevelled hair and in a ragged garment descended from the sky and comforted her, saying, "Do not cry. Your mother has killed the fish, and its bones are buried under a dunghill. Go home and

<sup>5</sup> 222-206 B.C.

carry the bones to your room and hide them. Whatever you shall want, pray to it and your wish will be granted." Yeh Hsien followed his advice, and it was not long before she had gold and jewellery and finery of such costly texture that they would have delighted the heart of any young maiden.

The night of the cave festival Yeh Hsien was told to stay at home and watch the fruit orchard. When the lonely girl saw that her mother had gone a long distance, she arrayed herself in a green silk jacket and followed to the cave. Her sister who had recognized her turned to the mother, saying, "Is that girl not strangely like my elder sister?" The mother also seemed to recognize her. When Yeh Hsien became aware of their glances she ran away, but in such haste that she dropped one of her slippers, which fell into the hands of the cave people.

When the mother came back home, she found her daughter sleeping with her arms around a tree; so she put aside any thoughts she may have had (about the identity of the finely dressed lady).

Now near the caves there was an island kingdom called T'o Huan. Through its strong army, it ruled over a couple of dozen islands, and its territorial waters covered several thousand *li*. The cave people therefore sold the slipper to the T'o Huan Kingdom, where it found its way to the King. The King made (the women of) his household try it on, but the slipper was an inch too short for those who had small feet. Then he had all of the women of the Kingdom try it, and none could fit.

The King then suspected the cave man of getting the slipper from dubious sources and imprisoned and tortured him. But that unfortunate soul could not tell where the shoe came from. Finally it was placed by the roadside and couriers were sent from house to house to arrest anyone who had the slipper. The King was greatly puzzled.

The house was searched and Yeh Hsien was found. She was made to put the slippers on, and they fitted her perfectly. She then appeared in her slippers and her green silk dress, looking like a goddess. Then a report was made to the King, and the King brought Yeh Hsien to his island home, together with her fish bones.

After Yeh Hsien had left the cave the mother and sister were killed by flying stones. The cave people pitied them and buried them in a pit and erected a tomb which they called "The Tomb of Regretful Women." The cave people worshipped them as the goddesses of match-makers, and whenever anyone asked them a favour regarding marriage, they were sure to have their prayer granted.

The King returned to his island and made Yeh Hsien his first wife. But during the first year of their marriage he asked the fish bones for so many jades and precious things that they refused any longer to

grant his wishes. He then took the bones and buried them close by the sea, with a hundred bushels of pearls, lined with a border of gold. When his soldiers rebelled against him, he went to the spot, but the tide had washed them away and they have never been found to this day. This story was told me by an old servant of my family, Li Shih-yüan. He comes from the cave people of Yungchow, and remembers many strange stories of the South.

## THE TALE OF CH'IENNIANG

*(A Tale of the T'ang Dynasty)*

Ch'ienniang was the daughter of Mr. Chang Yi, an official in Hunan. She had a cousin by the name of Wang Chou, who was a brilliant and handsome young man. They had grown up together from childhood, and as her father was very fond of the young boy, he had said that he would take Wang Chou as his son-in-law. This promise they had both heard, and as she was the only child, and they were very close together, their love grew from day to day. They were now grown-up young people, and even had intimate relationships with each other. Unfortunately, her father was the only man who failed to perceive this. One day a young official came to beg for her hand from her father, and, ignoring or forgetting his early promise, he consented. Ch'ienniang, torn between love and filial piety, was ready to die with grief, while the young man was so disgusted that he decided he would go abroad rather than stay and see his sweetheart become the bride of another person. So he made up a pretext and informed his uncle that he had to go away to the capital. As the uncle could not persuade him to stay, he gave him money and presents and prepared a farewell feast for him. Wang Chou, sad to take leave of his lover, was thinking it all over at the feast and he told himself that it was best to go, rather than remain to carry on a hopeless romance.

So Wang Chou set out on a boat of an afternoon, and before he had gone a few miles, it was already dark. He told the boatman to tie up the boat along shore and rest for the night. That night he could not sleep, and toward midnight he heard the sound of quick footsteps approaching. In a few minutes the sound had drawn near the boat. He got up and inquired, "Who is there at this hour of the night?" "It is I, even Ch'ienniang," was the reply. Surprised and delighted beyond measure, he led her down to the boat, and there she told him that she had hoped to be his wife, that her father had been unfair to him, and that she could not bear parting from him. She was afraid, too, that he, lonely and travelling in strange parts, might be driven to take his own life. So she

had braved the censure of society and the anger of her parents and come to follow him wherever he should go. Thus they were happy together and continued their journey to Szechuen.

Five years passed happily and she bore him two sons. But they had no news from the family, and she was daily thinking of her parents. It was the only thing that marred their happiness. She did not know whether her parents were living and well or not, and one night she began telling Wang Chou how unhappy she was, and that since she was the only child, she felt guilty of great filial impiety to leave the old parents in this manner. "You have a good daughter's heart, and I am with you," said her husband. "Five years have passed; surely they are not still angry with us. Let's go home." Ch'ienniang was overjoyed to hear this, and so they made preparations to go home with their two children.

When the boat had reached her home town, Wang Chou said to Ch'ienniang, "I do not know what state of mind your parents are in. So let me go alone first to find out." His heart was palpitating as he drew near his father-in-law's house. On seeing his father-in-law, Wang Chou knelt down and kowtowed, and begged for forgiveness. On hearing this, Chang Yi was greatly surprised, and said, "What are you talking about? Ch'ienniang has been lying unconscious in bed for these last five years since you left. She has never even left her bed." "I am not lying," said Wang Chou. "She is well and waiting in the boat."

Chang Yi did not know what to think, so he sent two maid-servants to see Ch'ienniang. They saw her sitting, well dressed and happy in the boat, and she even told the servants to convey her love to her parents. Bewildered, the two maid-servants ran home to make their report, and Chang Yi was still more greatly puzzled. Meanwhile, she who was lying in bed in her chamber had heard of the news, and it seemed her illness was gone, and there was light in her eyes. She rose up from her bed and dressed herself before her mirror. Smiling and without saying a word, she came straight to the boat. She who was in the boat was starting for home, and they met on the river bank. When the two came close together, their bodies melted into one shape, and their dresses were double, and there appeared the old Ch'ienniang, as young and as lovely as ever.

Both her parents were overjoyed, but they bade their servants keep the secret and not tell their neighbours about it, in order to avoid gossip. So no one, except the close relatives of the Chang family, ever knew of this strange happening.

Wang Chou and Ch'ienniang lived on as husband and wife for over forty years before they died.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The story is supposed to have happened around the year A.D. 690.

## THE MAN WHO SOLD GHOSTS

*(From Soushenchi, Fourth Century)*

When Sung Tingpo of Nanyang was a young man, he was walking one night when he met a ghost. He asked the ghost who he was and the ghost said he was a ghost. "Who are you?" asked the ghost in return, and Tingpo lied to him and answered, "I am a ghost, too." The ghost then asked him where he was going, and Tingpo replied, "I am going to Wanshih town." "I am going there, too," said the ghost. So they went along together. After a mile or so, the ghost said it was stupid for both of them to walk, when they could carry one another by turn. "That is a good idea," said Tingpo. The ghost carried Tingpo first, and after a mile he said, "You are too heavy for a ghost. Are you one really?" Tingpo explained that he was a new ghost and was therefore somewhat heavier. Tingpo then began to carry the ghost, but it was very light as if he were carrying no weight at all. They thus carried one another by turns and Tingpo began to ask the ghost what ghosts were afraid of. "What ghosts are most afraid of is human saliva," the ghost replied. They then went along until they came to a stream. Tingpo let the ghost go ahead and observed that the ghost made no noise in the water at all, but when he went in, the ghost heard the swish-swash in the water and asked him for an explanation. Tingpo again explained, "Don't be surprised, for I am a new ghost and am not quite used to getting across the water yet." When they were approaching the town, Tingpo began to carry the ghost on his back and gripped him very tight. The ghost began to shout and cry and struggled to get down, but Tingpo gripped him still more tightly. When he reached the streets, he let the ghost down, when it changed itself into a goat. Tingpo spat on the goat so that it could not change itself again, and sold it for fifteen hundred cash and went home. That was why there was a saying by Shih Ts'ung, "Tingpo sold a ghost for fifteen hundred cash."

## IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE DRUNK

*(From Soushenchi, Fourth Century)*

Ti Hsi was a native of Chungshan and he could make "thousand-day wine" which would make a man drunk for a thousand days. There was a man of the district by the name of Hsüan Shih who wanted to taste this wine at his home. The next day he went to see Ti Hsi and asked for a drink, and the latter said, "My wine is not quite thoroughly fermented, and I dare not offer it to you." "Even so, let me have a sip," said Hsüan. Ti Hsi could not say "no" and he gave him a cup. "That's

wonderful," said Hsüan, "give me another cup." "You should go home now," replied Ti Hsi. "Come back another day. This cup alone will enable you to get drunk for a thousand days." Hsüan left, looking a little foolish, and when he went home, he died under the influence of the wine. His family never suspected it and wept and buried him.

After three years had passed, Ti Hsi said to himself, "Hsüan must be awake by this time. I must go to see him." When he reached Hsüan's home, he inquired if Hsüan was at home. His family was greatly surprised and said, "He has been dead for a long time. We have already taken off the mourning." Ti Hsi was frightened and said, "Why, it's my wonderful wine which can make one drunk for a thousand days. He ought to be ready to wake up just about now." He then ordered Hsüan's family to dig up the grave and open the coffin to see what was happening. There was a mist of vapour shooting up from the grave high into the sky, and accordingly he ordered the work to be begun. When the coffin top was taken off, the man was seen to be opening his eyes and yawning and said, "Oh, it's wonderful to be drunk!" Then he asked Ti Hsi, "What kind of wine is it that you make? Just one cup has such an effect. I have just waked up. What time of the day is it?" The people standing on top of the grave laughed at him, but a strong smell from the grave assailed their nostrils, and all of them fell drunk for three months.

### IT'S GOOD TO BE HEADLESS

*(From Luyichi, Ninth Century)*

In the time of Han Wuti (140-87 B.C.), Chia Yung of Ts'angwu was serving as magistrate of Yüchang. One day he went out to fight bandits. He was wounded and lost his head. Yung mounted his horse and returned to the camp. The soldiers and people of the camp all came to look at him, and Yung spoke from his chest, "I was defeated by the bandits and they cut off my head. Tell me, in your opinion, does it look better to have a head or be without a head?" The officers wept and said, "It's better to have a head." And Yung replied, "I don't think so. It's just as good to be without a head."

### THE BROTHERS' SEARCH FOR THEIR FATHER

*(Eighteenth Century)*

(The "Search of Two Filial Sons of Yüyao for Their Father across a Thousand Miles," is a true story written by Weng Kwang'ing of Wukiang, and is attached to a book of genealogy of the Clan of Weng of Yüyao, in Chekiang. The style is that of the usual biography of ancestors, with which Chinese litera-

ture abounds, though few searches for relatives are quite so dramatic as this one. It is included here as showing the part which the family plays in Chinese society. It may make some thinking Christian missionaries hesitate to destroy Chinese ancestral worship and break up both the corner-stone of the Chinese social system and their living, concrete sense of continuity with the past. According to Confucian teachings, filial piety is the basis of moral character, and as will be seen in this sketch, good moral habits are first formed in the family during childhood.—*Ed.*)

This record of two sons' search for their father across a thousand miles is written concerning the efforts of granduncles of our clan Chishan and Luyeh to search for their father. Chishan's posthumous name<sup>7</sup> was Yünhuai, and his literary name was Chihshan. Luyeh's posthumous name was Yünpiao and his literary name was Chinkung. Their family had lived for generations in Yüyao Hsien in eastern Chekiang. Their father was Ancestor Tahuan, whose posthumous name was Ying. He was one of the Confucian scholars of the town, deep in his scholarship and quiet in temperament. He used to sit silently the whole day, and whenever he passed a beautiful mountain landscape, his mind dwelled on poetic, unearthly thoughts. All his writings were devoted to expounding the (Sung) Confucian philosophy of reason, free of Buddhist or Taoist ideas. Thus he was much admired as a pure Confucianist in his village.

Ancestor Tahuan's wife had a brother, surnamed Wu, who was appointed magistrate of Kungch'eng in Kwangsi. When he was going to his office, he mortgaged his land to the clan relatives of Ancestor Tahuan. The mortgagee, however, considered it poor land and insisted on having Ancestor Tahuan's land instead, and Ancestor Tahuan generously changed the deed and gave him his own land in exchange. The interest he had to pay on this mortgage was fifteen hundred bushels a year. In the years 1690 and 1691 there was a drought, and the clan relatives pressed for payment of capital and interest very hard. Ancestor did not know what to do, but was urged by the man to go to Kwangsi. If he did not go, he would give the impression of being not willing to do his best. At last he was compelled to take the journey, but he sang on the way while tapping on the side of the boat. On the fifth day of the eleventh month, 1692, when his boat was stopping at Hsint'angchan, in Ch'iyang Hsien of Yungchow, Hunan, he suddenly disappeared at night. The son of the magistrate of Kungch'eng (his brother-in-law), who was with him on the same boat, reported it to the magistrate, and a great search was instituted for him for five days in vain. A messenger

<sup>7</sup> Name of a deceased ancestor.

was then sent home to report the news, when Madame Wu<sup>8</sup> heard the news, she bit her finger until it bled and fell unconscious. When she came to again, she looked up and sighed, "Alas! My husband is calling me. He didn't want to go at first, and when he was about to start, he called for a lamp and lifted the bed curtain to look at his two sons. The brothers were fast asleep, but he turned round to look again, and with sighs and tears in his eyes he left the room. I saw him to the door, and he said to me, 'Don't think about me. It will be your responsibility to bring them up.' As I think of them now, these were inauspicious words."

She then sent an old servant to Kwangsi. In 1693, the magistrate of Kungch'eng (her brother) died in his office, and his son was bringing his coffin home together with the old servant. On their way they passed Hsint'angchan, where their boat stopped, and a public notice was posted, describing Ancestor Tahuang's appearance and giving details of his native place, his names and the date of his disappearance. They searched for several days without results. When the old servant returned with the report to Madame Wu, she again wept until she became unconscious. When she came to, she said, "Now there is no more hope." And she took the cap and gown of her husband and placed them on the altar and the relatives put on the regular dress of mourning and wept and poured the wine of sacrifice morning and night. A divination was made at the Temple to Kuankung with the following verse as the oracle:

*A small boat stops at the river bank in rain and wind.  
The brothers look at one another in their dreams.  
Already torn apart by death at the ends of the earth,  
Yet there comes the unexpected news of returning alive.*

The divination was taken three times and each time the oracle came out the same, which very much surprised the family. At the time of the disappearance, Chishan was eight years old, and Luyeh was only three. Since they had this divination corroborated three times, their mother used to carry Luyeh on her breast and wept in the courtyard, saying, "Son, can you grow up to search for your father?" and was satisfied only when the child nodded.

After three years, the mother died with that regret in her breast. While she was still alive she called to her two daughters, and pointing to her two sons, said, "The reason why I did not die after I heard the news in the year *jenshen* (1692) was the hope that when they grew up

<sup>8</sup> That is, Madame Weng, wife of the missing person. In literary Chinese, the wife is designated by her own family name.



I might be able to bring them along and personally search for him in the districts of Yungchow and Hengchow. Even if I could not see him alive again, I might be buried in the same grave with him. But now there is no more hope." The four children wept by her side and received her last instructions. Afterwards the two sons often embraced each other and wept, as if they didn't want to live. Again they inquired from people who had gone with their father to Kwangsi, but none could give any clue. Their cousin-sister still remembered the verse which Ancestor Tahuan wrote when his boat was stopping at Hsint'angchan, the last two lines of which ran:

*From where could be seen in cold frost the ancient temple bell  
A speck of translucent light shone from the Buddhist lamp.*

The family accordingly conjectured together, believing that since he was writing verse in the boat at night, he could not have been lost on shore. When they inquired further from people who had again visited Kungch'eng, these people had forgotten even the name of the location of the mishap. The two sons were greatly distressed, and said to one another, "Are we brothers to lose by comparison with Miss Ts'ao O?"<sup>9</sup>

In the year 1697, Chishan was already thirteen, and he went to Kwangsi, bringing along an old servant with him. At Liuchow, both young master and servant fell ill, and the servant soon died. The boy carried his own bedding and crossed the Hsiang River to Hunan, and nearly died in the waves. Alone and sick at heart, he used to cry on the journey, and it happened that a merchant of his district met him and brought him home. His cousin-sister welcomed him home and said with tears in her eyes, "I know you are taking this trip in accordance with your mother's wish. However, is that all your mother expected of you brothers? Have you forgotten what your mother said your father had said at his departure? Have you forgotten what she said when she was living? Your parents wanted you to grow up and be independent. Now are you already independent? You have undertaken a journey of a thousand miles at your age, without thinking of the true wish of your father and mother. Should you deprive them of their ancestral sacrifices without accomplishing anything, would you not grieve them in their graves?" Thereupon the two brothers wept and took her advice to heart, giving up the idea of going abroad again.

At this time, Ancestor Tahuan's family fortune was all used up and

<sup>9</sup> Ts'ao O was a girl who went in search of her father who had been drowned and finally drowned herself. It was said that after five days her corpse was found holding her father's corpse. The story is well preserved in a famous stone inscription now very much prized as a model for calligraphy.

they could not support themselves. Chishan therefore worked as an apprentice in a pharmacist shop, while Luyeh was adopted as son by a certain uncle; but when the said uncle had two sons of his own later, Luyeh became superfluous and his brother took him home. Chishan asked his younger brother what he wanted to do, and Luyeh replied that he would like to be a scholar. "Good," said the brother. "Your sister-in-law and I will take care of your board and tuition and expenses." Luyeh began then to work hard at his studies and train his character under a teacher, and the people of the village began to say, "Tahuan has a worthy son. The orphans are coming up, and his progeny will prosper." When Luyeh was nineteen (in 1711) he was studying at his village and was going to attend the district examinations. There was a flood, and Chishan made a raft and rowed him home himself. When the results were published, his name came out first, and thus he became a "student of the district."

Three years hereafter, Luyeh brought a servant and went to Hunan to search for his missing father, but without finding any trace. On his way to Kwangsi, he passed rivers and climbed over high peaks. The servant's expression suddenly changed and he rushed towards Luyeh with a knife. The latter dodged and the servant rolled down the precipice and died. He then carried his own baggage on his shoulder and begged his way about. After going through many hardships, he came home without finding anything. At this time, his elder brother had by thrift and hard work saved up enough to buy a land of a hundred *mu* (sixteen acres), so that he could continue to pay for his brother's tuition and expenses.

In the year 1723, Luyeh was successful at the national examinations and became a *chinshih*,<sup>10</sup> and returned home. Chishan already had a son, and the brothers were both happy and sad when they met, and discussed together how they might find traces of their missing father. They then pricked their arms with a needle and wrote in blood a prayer of several hundred words, with which they asked again for divination at the Temple to Kuankung. The oracle again spoke of "returning alive," and they said to each other, "Can the god lie to us?" They swore to find their father, and would not return until they had found him. It was therefore planned that they should leave their families in the care of the two sisters. But there was high water in the sea, and the fields were flooded, and thinking it impossible to burden their sisters with the extra expense at such a time, they gave up the idea.

In the winter of the following year, the two brothers secretly made up

<sup>10</sup> Scholar of the third rank, who had passed successively the district, the provincial and the national examinations.

a travelling luggage and, behind closed doors, practised carrying it on their shoulders for a long journey without letting even their families know about it. In the second month of 1725, Luyeh also had a son born to him, and on the third day of the baby's birth, the two brothers left their homes without letting anyone know. For two years they wandered in Hunan and Kwangsi, and even went up the Lushan and the ghost valleys of Nanchang district, roaming in the thick forests amidst roaring tigers and wolves. Disregarding all danger, they went all over the mountains and whenever there was a Buddhist temple, they would stop and pray to the Buddhas. The people of Nanchang were greatly touched by the conduct of these filial sons and felt sorry for them.

Their two sisters thought of the long absence of the brothers, and sent a servant to Yungchow to look for them. Luyeh's friend, Shao Hung-chieh, was also sojourning at Yungchow at this time and met their servant. He inquired about the situation and the servant replied that he knew nothing, but that he had heard a monk of Feiyüntu say that Mr. Weng's two filial sons had gone one to the Tungting Lake, and the other to Hengshan. In the eleventh month of 1726, the two brothers met at the Hsiangshan Temple in Chuanchow, Kwangsi, by previous agreement. Hungchieh went at once to see them, and saw that the brothers' faces were tanned and their bones stuck out. They were wearing straw sandals and carrying dry food, as if intending to start for some other place. Hungchieh tried to dissuade them and said to them, "Now you two are making a mistake. I have read your father's writings; they are strictly Confucianist without any taint of Buddhist or Taoist thoughts. On account of the verse he left referring to the Buddhist lamp, you are searching for him among the Buddhist and Taoist priests. I am afraid you are misjudging your father. Moreover, he merely happened to write his last lines at Hsint'angchan. You must trace the matter back to where it took place, instead of going all over the country to look for him. You are wearing yourselves out to no good purpose. Why not have a boat made to order, to be used as your home? Go up and down the district of Yungchow and Hengchow, and stop at whatever islet, rocky shore, or branch stream, or hamlet or valley or town or highroads. After acquainting yourselves with the general topography of the place and the nature of the roads and rivers, then make inquiries among the farmers and fishermen and woodcutters. Then again in the quiet hours of the early dawn or when the moon is setting and the ravens are crying, sing the last verse your father wrote before he disappeared. I know that the celestial and earthly spirits will listen to your prayer and show you the way."

The brothers thought it good advice, and accordingly had a carpenter

get ready the timber for making a boat. In the first month of 1727, the boat was completed, and on its mast hung a flag with the words, "The boat of certain Weng brothers of Yüyao in search of their father." Thus they went up and down between Yungchow and Hengchow for over a half year.

Toward the end of the eighth month, their boat was stopping at White Sand Islet in Kiangkan. The brothers were weeping with their faces toward the river. An old man carrying a cane came to Kiangkan. His name was Cheng Haihuan (Sea-Returned), and he came up to the two brothers and said to them, "If you are searching for a living father, then I dare not say a word. If the contrary, he is buried there in this islet." The brothers were greatly surprised and asked for details, and Haihuan said, "My home is at Niaowotang, about seven miles from Kiangkan. My brother was called Haisheng (Sea-Born, or Sea-Alive). My brother's wife gave birth to a son on the seventh of the eleventh month in 1692. Haisheng was going to inform his wife's family and was drowned on the way while crossing the river. He was prevented from sinking by decaying reeds in the water, and was thus saved. Among the reeds, he saw a corpse and told me about it on his return. I went with him to see the corpse and pulled it ashore. The body was clothed in silk and was thin and white. We chose a spot and buried it, thinking it was a fellow sufferer like my brother. When the family of the magistrate of Kung-ch'eng was returning home and searching for your father, I read the notice and thought the details agreed, and was going to report when an old man of the village stopped me, saying, 'The notice does not speak of drowning. They are looking for a living person and you come with a report of a dead man. How are you going to ask the corpse to rise from its grave and identify himself? I am afraid it will be difficult for you brothers to answer their questions satisfactorily.' I therefore gave up, and when Haisheng heard about it, he ran after the official messenger, but the latter had already gone far away. For over thirty years now since that time, no one has mentioned this affair again. Now Haisheng, my brother, is dead, and I am old. I heard that you filial sons are looking for your father abroad and the wayfarers who heard of it all shed tears. How can I bear not to tell you what I know? When I pulled your father's body from the water, it was only two days after he was drowned at Hsint'ang. Haisheng's son, who was born then, is called Jusheng, and still living. Otherwise, I should not be able to remember the exact date."

The two brothers then followed the old man to his home and asked how it all happened. Haisheng's wife was still living and they said that at the time of the burial, they had picked up several articles found on the body, and that now only a key and a key-case still remained. The

two brothers at once asked for the key and key-case and sent a good walker to take them home to their cousin-sister. When the latter saw it, she was greatly touched and said, "This case was my present to uncle, embroidered by my own hand. When his trunk was sent home, there was a lock without the key to it. We opened it somehow and it was thus that we found the verse he wrote at Hsint'ang."

After three months, the good runner came back with the lock for the trunk, and the key was found to fit perfectly. The two brothers were then certain<sup>11</sup> it was indeed their father who had been drowned at Hsint'angchan and buried at the White Sand Islet. If it had not been for the information furnished by Haihuan, they would not have been able to clear up this eternal regret of their lives. And the oracle spoke of "returning alive," which fitted in with the names of brothers Haisheng and Haihuan (Sea-Returned and Sea-Alive). The god's oracle really fits in marvellously.

The brothers then requested from the magistrate permission for removing the remains of their father for burial in their native place in Chekiang. The magistrate showed great consideration for their feelings and gave the permission, but the inhabitants of the islet all came to the magistrate and said that the islet was formerly deserted but had now grown into quite a hamlet, all because of the protecting power of this grave. They asked therefore that the remains should not be removed. The magistrate respected their opinion and said to the brothers, "Your father's spirit has been enjoying peace in this soil. I think you had better not disturb his bones. Besides, the hamlet has grown up because of the grave, and every spring and autumn it will receive sacrifices like a god. I think your father should be well satisfied with it."

The brothers then built a hut by the grave and stayed in it for three months, after which they invoked the spirit and brought a small model coffin home. Several years afterwards, Chishan died, and Luyeh was appointed magistrate of Tungpo (in Honan), where he sent for his brother's family and looked after them in his official residence like his own. Soon he was transferred to Wuning, which was only about thirty miles from Ch'iyang Hsien (in which lay Hsint'angchan), and he therefore erected a Memorial Temple at Hoput'ang near the site of his father's grave. He purchased some land, whose produce was to be used for keeping up the sacrifices, and appointed some inhabitants and the descendants of Cheng Haihuan to look after the Temple generation after generation.

The magistrate of Ch'iyang, Chüehlo Cho-erh-pu,<sup>12</sup> set up a stone

<sup>11</sup> Without absolute certainty, the brothers could not, according to custom, pay due ceremony to the grave as that of their father.

<sup>12</sup> A Manchu, as indicated by the Manchu name.

inscription telling the story. Luyeh ended up as district magistrate of Taochow (Yungchow) and left a good name for his administration, which is recorded in the Chapter on Famous Officials in the Provincial Records (*Fuchih*) of Hunan. There are the following records of the life of the two brothers: "The Story of a Search for Father" by Shao Hungchieh and Wu Hsiwen,<sup>13</sup> "History of the White Sand Islet" by Ch'iu Yinyü, "Story of Seeking for Father" by Chang Ts'anchih (which is a mere outline of events), the record of Shih Yühuei, the biographical sketches by Li Tsuhuei and Chang Kengchih. They vary in some details and in omissions, and I, Kuangp'ing, have therefore made use of all this material to write this sketch, in order to show that the filial conduct of the two men was enough to touch the gods' heart and make the spirits weep. For this reason, they went through the dangers of the waves and the wild beasts and yet were preserved and able to find the location of their father's grave. Therefore I have taken the liberty to edit it and put it at the back of the genealogy book of the clan, in order not only to let him serve as a model for our whole clan, but also to tell the story to all who are yet to be born as sons of men in the world.

### THE PRIVATE HISTORY OF QUEEN FEIYEN (*First Century, B.C.*)

(The "Private History of Queen Feiyen" is written by one Ling Yüan, Commander of Hotung in Han Dynasty, a contemporary of Yang Hsiung (first decades of the Christian era). It belongs to that vast storehouse of private notes on current or historical events in Chinese literature, of the nature of Pepys' Diaries, that are not found in official histories. It is apparently a story told by some old woman in the palace, possibly Fanyi in the story, and has all the faults and virtues of old-womanish gossip, which belongs to the school of unconscious realism. The story is that of a half-educated clerk, with what might be called "misspellings" and "ungrammatical" passages, and there is utterly no sense of composition. But it gives us a very intimate glimpse into the licentious court life of China, which probably has not varied in the last two thousand years. The unconscious realists beat the conscious realists in realism, and I have had to delete passages that would be considered downright obscene by Western literary standards. It is a pity, because if sex were not so much hedged about, there might be less psychosis. On the other hand, I do not want the book to be banned in Boston. Apart from the light it throws incidentally on court life and ancient beauty aids, the interest of the story lies in the jealousy of two sisters, and there is no question but that the real heroine of the story is not Feiyen, but her younger sister.—*Ed.*)

<sup>13</sup> Friend and relative mentioned above.

Queen Chao Feiyeu's<sup>14</sup> father Feng Wanchin and grandfather Feng Tali were makers of musical instruments and musicians in the employ of the Prince of Kiangtu. Wanchin was not content to carry on the musical lore handed down in his family, but composed a type of music without the regular verse form, with many embellishments and sad airs. This he called poignant or mad melodies, and it was very touching to hear. The granddaughter of the Prince, Princess of Kusu, who was married to Commander Chao Manman of Kiangtu, fell in love with Wanchin. She was not happy at dinner unless she was sharing the same bowl with Wanchin, and they had relations with one another. Chao Manman was a jealous man, and besides had been suffering from a secret disease and so had abstained from sleeping with his wife. So when the Princess conceived, she was very much frightened and retired to her palace on pretext of illness. She gave birth to two daughters, the elder one called Yichu and the second one called Hoteh, whom she sent to Wanchin's home, but they took the family name of Chao (The Princess's husband).

Yichu was a very intelligent child, and she studied a copy of Peng Tsu's "Treatise on Circulation Systems" and mastered the art of regulating circulations. When she grew up, she was very pretty with a slender, lithesome figure, and people called her Feiyeu ("Flying Swallow"). Hoteh's skin was so smooth that water would not stay on it when she came out of her bath. She was good at singing and had a soft, low voice. Both sisters were distinguished beauties.

When Wanchin died, their family had lost its fortune, and the sisters moved on to the capital Ch'angan, where they were known as the daughters of Chao, or as some say, the "other children" of Manman. They were then staying in the same alley with Chao Lin, who was an officer in the household of Princess of Yang-o. Thus coming under his protection, they often presented Lin with their own embroidery work, and soon they were staying in Lin's home and were accepted as his daughters. Lin's eldest daughter was serving in the palace, and she returned home on account of sickness and later died. In this way, Feiyeu and her sister often went to serve in the home of the Princess of Yang-o, taking the opportunity to learn song and dance. Sometimes they would be so occupied with it that they forgot their meals. They got very little pay for their service and were often short of money, but they would spend on powder and cream and beauty aids without regard of cost, for which they were laughed at.

Feiyeu had relations with a neighbour who was an archer of the Imperial Park. She was poor and shared the same bed with Hoteh. On a snowy night, she would stand by her house, waiting in the open for the

Empress Chao of Han Ch'engt'i, who ruled in 32-17 B.C.

archer. By regulating her breath, she could keep her body warm and remain without shiver, so that the archer thought she was a fairy. Through the influence of her mistress's family, she was sent up to the palace. Her cousin, Fanyi, who was a keeper of curtains at the palace, knew of Feiyen's affair with the archer, and was afraid for her. When she received the Emperor's favour, Feiyen denied him; she closed her eyes and wept till her tears wetted her cheeks and kept her legs shivering. For three nights the Emperor was thus denied, but he did not feel offended. Some of the palace favourites asked the Emperor, and the latter replied, "She is full and soft as if without bones, and is very modest and shy, unlike you wenches. She is a virtuous girl." . . . From then on she stayed in the inner palace and was made Empress Chao.

The Emperor was in his private room in the Wanyang Hall, looking over the list, and Fanyi, who was close by, took the opportunity to tell him that Feiyen had a sister by the name of Hoteh, who was both beautiful and had a much gentler temper than her sister. The Emperor sent a servant, Lü Yenfu, with a jewelled hand-cart to welcome her. Hoteh declined, saying, "Unless my sister calls me, I dare not go. You can return to the palace with my head." Upon Yenfu's report, Fanyi took the Empress's silk-covered order book and sent for Hoteh. The Emperor prepared to receive her in his bedroom in the Yükuang Hall. Hoteh had come with a fresh ointment of aloes wood perfume; her hair was done up in the "new coiffure" and her eyebrows were painted in the "distant hill-line" style, with a small red beauty spot painted on her face. She was wearing the "lazy suit," with a short embroidered skirt, narrow sleeves and plum-patterned socks. When she was presented through Fanyi, she said, "My sister is terribly jealous, and she can easily ruin and disgrace me. I am not afraid of death, but unless it is with my sister's consent, I would rather die than suffer disgrace." Without looking up, she retired. Her voice was soft and clear, and those present sighed in admiration. The Emperor therefore sent her back to her home.

Now there was one Lady Chao, whose used to serve Emperor Hsüan as a keeper of incense, but who was now a white-haired woman serving as a teacher of the palace maids. She spat when she spoke of the Empress, "She is a flood which is going to overwhelm us."<sup>15</sup> The Emperor therefore followed Fanyi's advice and opened up the Yüant'iao Hall for the Empress's residence, presenting her with a cloud-pattern curtain, marble tables and a gold nine-panelled collapsible screen. And Fanyi said to the Empress, "The Emperor is without an heir, and Your Majesty should be thinking of the Imperial line. Why not speak to the

<sup>15</sup> The Han Imperial House was supposed to have risen to power on the strength of the fire element.



Emperor and ask him to take one who can give him a son?" The Empress approved and that night Hotch was presented to the Emperor, who was greatly pleased with her. He felt all over her body and called her the Land of Voluptuousness, and said to Fanyi, "I am going to live and die in this Land, rather than imitate Emperor Wuti, who sought the Land of Immortality." Fanyi cried, "Ten Thousand Years!" and congratulated him, saying, "Your Majesty now has met a fairy." The Emperor immediately gave her twenty-four pieces of fish-scale, gold-spotted brocade. Hotch thus received the special favour of the Emperor, and she was given the official title of Lady (*Chieh-yü*) Chao.

Hotch used to go to see her sister, greeting her with the ceremony of a child to its parent. One day, the sisters were sitting together, and apparently by mistake, the Empress spat on the sleeve of Hotch's dress. "See, Sister," the latter said, "you have made marks on my purple sleeve, looking just like mosses on rocks. The Imperial Tailors<sup>16</sup> would not be able to make a sleeve with such a design." The Empress in her own court had relations with palace attendants and servants who had many children, and Hotch tried her best to protect her by often saying to the Emperor with tears in her eyes, "My sister has a bad temper. If enemies should ever frame her up, we sisters should be dead." For that reason, those who informed the Emperor of the Empress's conduct were killed. And the attendants and servants wore fancy-coloured trousers and did what they pleased at Yüan'iao Hall with complete freedom. But the Empress still failed to produce an heir to the throne.

The Empress used to bathe herself with a bath of five ingredients and seven perfumes, sit in the seat of perfumed *aquilaria agallocha* wood, and drench herself with the ethereal hundred-ingredient perfume water. Her sister bathed herself simply with nutmeg and used the powder of flower essence, but the Emperor once told Fanyi, "Although the Empress breathes an exotic perfume, it cannot be compared with the natural fragrance of the Lady Chao's flesh." There was one Li Yanghua, who used to serve in Prince Yi of Kiangtu's court, and who was the niece of the sisters' grandfather. In her old age, she came to live with the sisters' family as their aunt. Yanghua was an expert in beauty aids, and she used to advise the Empress to use the nine-curved aloes wood ointment and take a medicine from the navel of the male muskdeer for relaxing the muscles. This latter was also taken by Hotch, but when often taken by women, the monthly flow would become thin. One day the Empress spoke about this to the Court Pharmacist, Shangkuan Wu, and Wu said,

<sup>16</sup> Strictly, officers in charge of the furniture, upholstery and dresses of the Imperial Household.

"If this is the case, how can you have children?" She taught her to douche herself with a kind of fern,<sup>17</sup> but still it did not work.

The tribes of Cambodia sent a tribute of a giant mother-of-pearl and a Nightless Pearl, which shone like moonlight. Their soft glow made anyone look beautiful in it. The Emperor gave the mother-of-pearl to the Empress and the pearl to Hoteh. The Empress fixed the shell in a curtain of golden threads, which gave a light like the full moon. Some time afterwards, the Emperor remarked to Lady Chao, "The Empress does not look so beautiful in daytime as she does at night. One feels like being transported into a different world." When she heard this, she decided to give the Nightless Pearl to the Empress as a birthday present, but did not tell her about it. When Lady Chao heard from the Emperor that a new title was going to be conferred upon the Empress, she sent in her presents to the Empress with the following memorandum: "On this auspicious day when the spirits of Heaven and Earth blend in harmony and when my sister ascends the Empress's throne, our ancestors are greatly honoured and I am extremely delighted, and beg to present the following twenty-seven articles in congratulation: 1 gold-sprinkled stitched mattress, 1 *aquilaria agallocha* lotus bowl, 1 five-coloured concentric knot, 1 piece of mandarin-duck designed gold-thread brocade, 1 crystal screen, 1 Nightless Pearl, 1 perfumed wild-cat-skin cushion, 1 perfumed tiger-skin with sandalwood statue, 2 carved ambergris fish, 1 single stalk precious lotus, 1 seven-panelled water-calthrop-shaped mirror, 4 pure gold finger rings, 1 vanishing gauze dress, 3 perfumed *wenlo* silk hand rests, 1 jar glamour hair ointment, 3 bed incense cases, 2 pairs ivory antiseptic chopsticks,<sup>18</sup> 1 case white jade cream. I am asking my maid Kuo Yüchiung to bring them to you." The Empress gave her in return a coloured bed curtain of cloud brocade, a jade pot and aloes wood incense. Lady Chao said she would not think of taking these things if they were not given her by her sister, and the Emperor showed his appreciation.

It was then ordered that the Emperor was to go and stay at Yichow for three years, and a special brocade curtain and bed decorated with *aquilaria agallocha* wood was ordered for the Lady Chao. The latter received His Majesty at the Taiyi Lake, and a great boat was made, supposed to contain the whole palace household. A tower was erected in the middle of the lake forty feet high. The Emperor was wearing a flowing-line seamless gown, and the Empress was wearing a purple skirt sent as tribute from Annam and a light-green gauze dress. She was singing the song, "Oh, Waft the Wind," in the high towers, and the Emperor was beating time by striking a jade bowl with an ivory hair

<sup>17</sup> *Yanghua*, not known in present Chinese *Materia Medica*; possibly *aspidium filix-mas*.

<sup>18</sup> That changed colour after contact with poison.

brooch, while the Empress's favourite attendant, Feng Wufang, was asked to play the hand-pipes (*sheng*) in accompaniment. When the Empress was singing the song, "Down the Stream," dreamily, a sudden gust of wind arose, and her voice rose with the wind, while Wufang whistled gently along with it. The wind blew up her skirt, and she cried, "Look at me, look at me!" and she raised her flowing sleeves and said, "Oh, fairy, oh, fairy! You have forsaken the old for the new. Have you forgotten me?" And the Emperor (seeing that the wind was blowing her off), said to Wufang, "Hold her!" Wufang stopped playing and caught the Empress by her shoe. After a while, the wind stopped and the Empress wept and said, "Your Majesty was kind to me and saved me from becoming a fairy." And she felt very sad, and tears came down her cheeks, and the Emperor loved her the more. He gave Wufang thousands of pieces of silver and granted him permission to enter the Empress's bedroom. Some days afterwards, some court favourites split their skirts and called it "the skirt for holding the fairy."

Lady Chao was growing in the favour of the Emperor, and received the title of Chaoyi. She wished to live near her sister, and the Emperor built for her the Shaopin Studio, the Luhua Hall, the Hanfeng Hall, the P'och'ang Hall, the Ch'iu-an Hall, all with front and back courts. He also built for her a heated room, a room of ice jars, an orchid bath room, with many inner chambers and connecting corridors, decorated with gold and jade, with the wall covered with white jade in a multitude of designs. Her quarters were connected with those of her sister's, through a gate called the "Approach to the Fairies."

Now the Empress, being secure in the Emperor's favour, grew more licentious every day, and she asked magicians to secure for her drugs for staying old age. An emissary from the P'oyi tribes of the Southwest had come with tributes to the Emperor, and he was a man who after a wine feast could go without sleep for twenty-four hours. He was staying in the office for foreign emissaries and there was a singular glamour about his appearance. The Empress heard about it and asked him what special magic he had. And the foreigner replied, "My magic consists in regarding heaven and earth and life and death all alike and levelling the differences between existence and non-existence, so that through all transformations I remain unchanged." The Empress asked Fanyi's follower Puchou to give him a thousand pieces of silver, but the foreigner said, "Who wishes to learn my teachings must refrain from licentious living and telling lies." Accordingly, the Empress was discouraged. One day, Fanyi was serving the Empress at bath, and they were chatting happily together. The Empress told her what the foreigner had said, and Fanyi slapped her hands and said with a laugh, "I remember

that when I was in Kiangtu, Aunt Li Yanghua used to keep some fighting ducks in a pond, but was worried on account of the beavers that came to prey upon them. A woman, Nuei, of Chuli, got a wildcat that preyed upon the beavers and gave it to our aunt, but said that the wildcat itself had to be fed with ducks. Aunt was angry and strangled the wildcat. This is just like what the foreigner says." The Empress broke into a loud laughter and said, "The dirty foreigner! He is not worth my strangling."

There was one attendant who had intimate relations with the Empress, by the name of Yen Red-Phoenix, who could scale walls and houses. He also had relations with the younger sister, now called Chaoyi. He was just leaving Chaoyi's house, when the Empress happened to come in. Now it was the custom that on the fifth day of October, the Emperor was to go to the Langan Temple for worship. On this day, people played the clay pipe and beat the drum, and danced and sang with their arms joined together while their feet tapped the ground. When Red Phoenix came to assist in the music, the Empress said to Chaoyi, "Who does Red Phoenix come for?" And Chaoyi replied, "He comes for you. Can it be for anybody else?" The Empress was angry and pushed her cup at Chaoyi's face and replied, "Can a mouse bite a human being?" And Chaoyi replied, "He wears your clothes and has seen your underwear. That is quite enough. He does not have to bite anybody." Now Chaoyi had always been humble toward her sister, and the Empress was completely surprised by her insolent tone, and she stared for a long time without reply. Fanyi took off her hair brooch and kowtowed on the ground until she bled, and pulled Chaoyi to apologize to her sister. Chaoyi performed the bow and said, weeping, "Sister, have you forgotten how we used to share the bed together and how we could not sleep for the cold and you asked me to snuggle close to your back? Now we have been lucky and are honoured far above all the others. Besides, there is no rival from the outside. Can we bear to quarrel between ourselves?" Then the Empress also shed tears and held Chaoyi's hand and she took a brooch of purple jade with nine young birds and put it in her sister's hair. Thus the sisters were reconciled. The Emperor came to hear about the affair, but he was afraid of the Empress's temper and dared not ask her, but asked Chaoyi. The latter replied, "She was merely jealous of me. The Han Imperial House rose by the power of the fire element; that was why she referred to Your Majesty as Red Dragon and Phoenix." The Emperor believed her and was greatly pleased.

Once the Emperor went out to hunt on an early snowy morning and caught an illness. He became impotent, and nothing availed except by holding Chaoyi's legs . . . but Chaoyi would not keep still, but turned

about, which prevented His Majesty from holding her leg for long. Fanyi said to Chaoyi, "His Majesty has tried all medicines brought by the magicians without avail, but Your Majesty's leg alone has worked. God has given you a great blessing. Why do you turn about to defy the Emperor?" And Chaoyi replied, "Fortunately I do turn about, and that is how I can still hold his affection. If I do as my sister does and ask him to hold my leg, he would be tired of me soon. How then shall I be able to excite him?" She was spoiled by the Emperor and, when she was ill, would not take food or drink unless the Emperor fed her with a spoon or chopsticks, and when she had to take bitter medicine, she would take it only from the Emperor's own mouth.

When Chaoyi took a bath at night in the Orchid Bathroom, her body shone in the candle light. The Emperor used to take a peep at her, and a maid told Chaoyi about it, and Chaoyi wrapped herself in a towel and had the candles removed. Another day, the Emperor promised the maids gold<sup>19</sup> if they would keep quiet. Some maid coming out through the curtain chanced upon the Emperor and went in and informed Chaoyi, and Chaoyi hid herself. From then on, His Majesty used to peep at her from behind the curtains of the Orchid Bath, and he carried about him a lot of gold so that whenever he saw a maid passing by, he would stop her and give her some gold. The maids were greedy for gold and passed out and in one after another without stop. He gave the night attendants as much as over a hundred pieces of gold in one night.

The Emperor then became deprived of his sexual powers, and the Chief Physician could not do anything about it. He searched for rare medicines and obtained *shensüchiaio* ("Carefully Use Gum"), which was given to Chaoyi. Chaoyi used to give the Emperor one pill for one occasion. One night Chaoyi was drunk and gave him seven pills. His Majesty embraced her all night . . . and laughed hysterically. The next morning . . . His Majesty fell unconscious . . . and soon he died.<sup>20</sup> The attendants reported this to the Empress, and the Empress wanted to have Chaoyi tried. Chaoyi said, "I have handled His Majesty as a mother handles a child. And of all women in the world, he has loved and honoured me. How can I stand with my hands at my back like a prisoner in court to explain intimate details?" She then beat her chest and cried, "Your Majesty! Where have you gone?" Then she threw up blood and died.

<sup>19</sup> *Chin* can also refer to silver.

<sup>20</sup> The details of Ch'engti's death agree with the Biographies of the Empresses in Han History.

# Six Chapters of a Floating Life

## INTRODUCTION

Yün, I think, is one of the loveliest women in Chinese literature. She is not the most beautiful, for the author, her husband, does not make that claim, and yet who can deny that she is the loveliest? She is just one of those charming women one sometimes sees in the homes of one's friends, so happy with their husbands that one cannot fall in love with them. One is glad merely to know that such a woman exists in the world and to know her as a friend's wife, to be accepted in her household, to be able to come uninvited to her home for lunch, or to have her put a blanket around one's legs when one falls asleep while she is discussing painting and literature and cucumbers in her womanish manner with her husband. I daresay there are a number of such women in every generation, except that in Yün I seem to feel the qualities of a cultivated and gentle wife combined to a greater degree of perfection than falls within our common experience. For who would not like to go out secretly with her against her parents' wish to Taihu Lake and see her elated at the sight of the wide expanse of water, or watch the moon with her by the Bridge of Ten Thousand Years? And who would not like to go with her, if she were living in England, and visit the British Museum, where she would see the mediæval illuminated manuscripts with tears of delight? Therefore, when I say that she is one of the loveliest women in Chinese literature and Chinese history—for she was a real person—I do not think I have exaggerated.

Her life, in the words of Su Tungp'o, "was like a spring dream which vanished without a trace." Had it not been for a literary accident, we

might not have known that such a woman lived, loved and suffered. I am translating her story just because it is a story that should be told the world; on the one hand, to propagate her name, and on the other, because in this simple story of two guileless creatures in their search for beauty, living a life of poverty and privations, decidedly outwitted by life and their cleverer fellowmen, yet determined to snatch every moment of happiness and always fearful of the jealousy of the gods, I seem to see the essence of a Chinese way of life as really lived by two persons who happened to be husband and wife. Two ordinary artistic persons who did not accomplish anything particularly noteworthy in the world, but merely loved the beautiful things in life, lived their quiet life with some good friends after their own heart—ostensibly failures, and happy in their failure. They were too good to be successful, for they were retiring, cultivated souls, and the fact that they were disowned by their elders could not be counted against them, but was all to their credit. The cause of the tragedy lay simply in the fact that she knew how to read and write and that she loved beauty too much to know that loving beauty was wrong. As a daughter-in-law who could read and write, she had the unpleasant task of writing letters for her mother-in-law to her father-in-law abroad who wanted to marry a concubine, and she got so excited over a sing-song girl that she secretly arranged to have her husband take her as his concubine, and fell seriously ill because a more powerful young man snatched her away. There we see an elementary, though entirely innocent, conflict between her artistic temperament and the world of reality, a conflict further seen in her disguising herself as a man in order to see the “illuminated flowers” on a god’s birthday. Was it morally wrong for a woman to disguise herself as a man or to take a passionate interest in a beautiful sing-song girl? If so, she could not have been conscious of it. She merely yearned to see and know the beautiful things in life, beautiful things which lay not within the reach of moral women in ancient China to see. It was the same artistically innocent, but morally indecorous, urge that made her wish to visit like a man all the famous mountains in China which, since she could not do as a moral young woman, she was willing to look forward to in her old age. But she did not see the mountains, for she had already seen a beautiful sing-song girl, and that was indecorous enough for her parents to disown her as a sentimental young fool, and the rest of her life had to be spent in a struggle with poverty, with too little leisure and money for such delights as climbing famous mountains.

Did Shen Fu, her husband, perhaps idealize her? I hardly think so. The reader will be convinced of this when he reads the story itself. He made no effort to whitewash her or himself. In him, too, lived the spirit

of truth and beauty and the genius for resignation and contentment so characteristic of Chinese culture. I cannot help wondering what this commonplace scholar must have been like to inspire such a pure and loyal love in his wife, and to be able to appreciate it so much as to write for us one of the tenderest accounts of wedded love we have ever come across in literature. Peace be to his soul! His ancestral tomb is somewhere in the neighbourhood of Soochow, and if we are lucky, we may still be able to find it. I do not think it would be wrong to prepare some incense and fruits and say some prayers on our knees to these two sweet souls. If I were there, I would whistle the melodies of Maurice Ravel's "Pavane," sad as death, yet smiling, or perhaps Massenet's "Melodie," tender and resigned and beautiful and purged of all exciting passions. For in the presence of these souls, one's spirit also becomes humble, not before the great, but before the small things of life, for I truly believe that a humble life happily lived is the most beautiful thing in the universe. Inevitably, while reading and re-reading and going over this little booklet, my thoughts are led to the question of happiness. For those who do not know it, happiness is a problem, and for those who do know it, happiness is a mystery. The reading of Shen Fu's story gives one this sense of the mystery of happiness, which transcends all bodily sorrows and actual hardships—similar, I think, to the happiness of an innocent man condemned to a life-long sentence with the consciousness of having done no wrong, the same happiness that is so subtly depicted for us in Tolstoy's "Resurrection," in which the spirit conquers the body. For this reason, I think the life of this couple is one of the saddest and yet at the same time "gayest" lives, the type of gaiety that bears sorrow so well.

The Chinese title for this book is "Fousheng Liu Chi" or "Six Chapters of a Floating Life," of which only four remain. (The reference is to a passage in Li Po's poem, "Our floating life is like a dream; how many times can one enjoy oneself?") In form, it is unique, an autobiographical story mixed with observations and comments on the art of living, the little pleasures of life, some vivid sketches of scenery and literary and art criticism. The extant version was first published in 1877 by Yang Yinch'üan, who picked it up from a second-hand bookstore, with the two last chapters missing. According to the author's own testimony, he was born in 1763, and the fourth chapter could not have been written before 1808. A brother-in-law of Yang's and a well-known scholar, by the name of Wang T'ao,<sup>1</sup> had seen the book in his childhood, so that it is likely that the book was known in the neighbourhood of Soochow in the second or third decade of the nineteenth century. From Kuan Yi-ngo's

<sup>1</sup> Wang T'ao was the Chinese scholar who assisted James Legge in his translation of Chinese Classics at Hong Kong.



poems and from the known headings of the last chapters, we know that the Fifth Chapter recorded his experiences in Formosa, while the Sixth Chapter contained the author's reflections on the Way of Life. I have the fond hope that some complete copy of the book is still lying somewhere in some private collections or second-hand shops of Soochow, and if we are lucky, it is not altogether impossible that we may discover it still.

# Six Chapters of a Floating Life

by Shen Fu

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

Chap. I *Wedded Bliss*  
Chap. II *The Little Pleasures of Life*  
Chap. III *Sorrow*

Chap. IV *The Joys of Travel*  
Chap. V *Experience (missing)*  
Chap. VI *The Way of Life (missing)*

## CHAPTER I: WEDDED BLISS

I WAS BORN in 1763, under the reign of Ch'ienlung, on the twenty-second day of November. The country was then in the heyday of peace and, moreover, I was born in a scholar's family, living by the side of Ts'anglang Pavilion in Soochow. So altogether I may say the gods have been unusually kind to me. Su Tungp'o said: "Life is like a spring dream which vanishes without a trace." I should be ungrateful to the gods if I did not try to put my life down on record.

Since the *Book of Poems* begins with a poem on wedded love, I thought I would begin this book by speaking of my marital relations and then let other matters follow. My only regret is that I was not properly educated in childhood; all I know is a simple language and I shall try only to record the real facts and real sentiments. I hope the reader will be kind enough not to scrutinize my grammar, which would be like looking for brilliance in a tarnished mirror.

I was engaged in my childhood to one Miss Yü, of Chinsha, who died in her eighth year, and eventually I married a girl of the Ch'en clan. Her name was Yün and her literary name Suchen. She was my cousin, being the daughter of my maternal uncle, Hsinyü. Even in her childhood, she was a very clever girl, for while she was learning to speak,

she was taught Po Chiüi's poem, *The P'i P'a Player*, and could at once repeat it. Her father died when she was four years old, and in the family there were only her mother (of the Chin clan) and her younger brother K'ech'ang and herself, being then practically destitute. When Yün grew up and had learnt needle-work, she was providing for the family of three, and contrived always to pay K'ech'ang's tuition fees punctually. One day, she picked up a copy of the poem *The P'i P'a Player* from a paper basket, and from that, with the help of her memory of the lines, she learnt to read. Between her needlework, she gradually learnt to write poetry. One of her poems contained the two lines:

"Soaked in autumn, one's figure becomes thin,  
Touched by frost, the chrysanthemum grows fat."

When I was thirteen years old, I went with my mother to her maiden home and there we met. As we were two young innocent children, she allowed me to read her poems. I was quite struck by her talent, but feared she was too clever to be happy. Still I could not help thinking of her all the time, and once I told my mother, "If you choose a girl for me, I won't marry anyone except cousin Su." My mother also liked her for being so gentle, and gave her her gold ring as a token for the betrothal.

This was on July 16 in the year 1775. In the winter of this year one of my girl cousins was going to get married and I again accompanied my mother to her maiden home. Yün was of the same age as myself, but ten months older, and as we had been accustomed to calling each other 'elder sister' and 'younger brother' from childhood, I continued to call her 'Sister Su.'

At this time the guests in the house all wore bright dresses, but Yün alone was clad in a dress of quiet colour, and had on a new pair of shoes. I noticed that the embroidery on her shoes was very fine, and learnt that it was her own work, so that I began to realize that she was gifted at other things, too, besides reading and writing.

Of a slender figure, she had drooping shoulders, and a rather long neck, slim but not to the point of being skinny. Her eyebrows were arched, and in her eyes there was a look of quick intelligence and soft refinement. The only defect was that her two front teeth were slightly inclined forward, which was not a mark of good omen. There was an air of tenderness about her which completely fascinated me.

I asked for the manuscripts of her poems and found that they consisted mainly of couplets and three or four lines, being unfinished poems, and I asked her the reason. She smiled and said: "I have had no

teacher in poetry, and wish to have a good teacher-friend who could help me to finish these poems." I wrote playfully on the label of this book of poems the words: "Beautiful Lines in an Embroidered Case," and did not realize that in this case lay the cause of her short life.

That night, when I came home from my relatives' place in the country, whither I had accompanied my female cousin the bride, it was already midnight, and I felt very hungry and asked for something to eat. A maid-servant gave me some dried dates, which were too sweet for me. Yün secretly pulled me by the sleeve into her room, and I saw that she had hidden away a bowl of warm congee and some dishes to go with it. I was beginning to take up the chopsticks and eat it with great gusto when Yün's cousin Yüheng called out: "Sister Su, come quickly!" Yün quickly shut the door and said: "I am very tired and going to bed." Yüheng forced the door open and seeing the situation, said with a malicious smile at Yün, "So, that's it! A while ago I asked for congee and you said there was no more, but you really meant to keep it for your future husband." Yün was greatly embarrassed and everybody laughed at her, including the servants. On my part, I rushed away home with an old servant in a state of excitement.

Since the affair of the congee happened, she always avoided me when I went to her home afterwards, and I knew that she was only trying to avoid being made a subject of ridicule.

On the twenty-second of January in 1780, I saw her on our wedding night, and found that she had the same slender figure as before. When her bridal veil was lifted, we looked at each other and smiled. After the drinking of the customary twin cups between groom and bride, we sat down together at dinner and I secretly held her hand under the table, which was warm and small, and my heart was palpitating. I asked her to eat and learnt that she had been keeping fast for several years already. I found that the time when she began her fast coincided with my small-pox illness, and said to her laughingly: "Now that my face is clean and smooth without pock-marks, my dear sister, will you break your fast?" Yün looked at me with a smile and nodded her head.

This was on the twenty-second, my wedding night. On the twenty-fourth, my own sister was going to get married, and as there was to be a national mourning and no music was to be allowed on the twenty-third, we gave my sister a send-off dinner on the night of the twenty-second, and Yün was present at table. I was playing the finger-guessing game with the bridesmaids in the bridal chamber and being a loser all the time, fell asleep drunk like a fish. When I woke up the next morning, Yün had not quite finished her morning toilet.

That day we were kept busy entertaining guests, and towards evening,

music was played. After midnight, on the morning of the twenty-fourth, I, as the bride's brother, sent my sister away and came back towards three o'clock. The room was then pervaded with quietness, bathed in the silent glow of the candle-lights. I went in and saw Yün's woman servant taking a nap behind the bed, while Yün had taken off her bridal costume, but had not yet gone to bed. Her beautiful white neck was bent before the bright candles, and she was absorbed reading a book. I patted her on the shoulder and said: "Sister, why are you still working so hard? You must be quite tired with the full day we've had."

Quickly Yün turned her head and stood up saying: "I was going to bed when I opened the book-case and saw this book and have not been able to leave it since. Now my sleepiness is all gone. I have heard of the name of *Western Chamber* for a long time, but to-day I see it for the first time. It is really the work of a genius, only I feel that its style is a little bit too biting."

"Only geniuses can write a biting style," I smiled and said.

The woman servant asked us to go to bed and left us and shut the door. I began to sit down by her side and we joked together like old friends after a long separation. I touched her breast in fun and felt that her heart was palpitating too. "Why is Sister's heart palpitating like that?" I bent down and whispered in her ear. Yün looked back at me with a smile and our souls were carried away in a mist of passion. Then we went to bed, when all too soon the dawn came.

As a bride, Yün was very quiet at first. She was never sullen or displeased, and when people spoke to her, she merely smiled. She was respectful towards her superiors and kindly towards those under her. Whatever she did was done well, and it was difficult to find fault with her. When she saw the grey dawn shining through the window, she would get up and dress herself as if she had been commanded to do so. "Why?" I asked. "You don't have to be afraid of gossip, like the days when you gave me that warm congee." "I was made a laughing-stock on account of that bowl of congee," she replied, "but now I am not afraid of people's talk; I only fear that our parents might think their daughter-in-law lazy."

Although I wanted her to lie in bed longer, I could not help admiring her virtue, and so got up myself, too, at the same time with her. And so every day we rubbed shoulders together and clung to each other like an object and its shadow, and the love between us was something that surpassed the language of words.

So the time passed happily and the honeymoon was too soon over. At this time, my father Chiafu was in the service of the Kueich'i district government, and he sent a special messenger to bring me there, for, it

should be noted that, during this time, I was under the tutorship of Chao Shengtsai of Wulin. Chao was a very kindly teacher and to-day the fact that I can write at all is due entirely to his credit.

Now, when I came home for the wedding, it had been agreed that I could go back any time. So when I got this news, I did not know what to do. I was afraid Yün might break into tears, but on the other hand she tried to look cheerful and comforted me and urged me to go, and packed up things for me. Only that night I noticed that she did not look quite her usual self. At the time of parting, she whispered to me: "Take good care of yourself, for there will be no one to look after you."

When I went up on board the boat, the peach and pear trees on the banks were in full bloom, but I felt like a lonely bird that had lost its companions and as if the world was going to collapse around me. As soon as I arrived, my father left the place and crossed the river for an eastward destination.

Thus three months passed, which seemed to me like ten insufferable long years. Although Yün wrote to me regularly, still for two letters that I sent her, I received only one in reply, and these letters contained only words of exhortation and the rest was filled with airy, conventional nothings, and I felt very unhappy. Whenever the breeze blew past my bamboo courtyard, or the moon shone upon my window behind the green banana leaves, I thought of her and was carried away into a region of dreams.

My teacher noticed this, and sent word to my father, saying that he would give me ten subjects for composition and let me go home. I felt like an exiled prisoner receiving his pardon.

Strange to say, when I got on to the boat and was on my way home, I felt that a quarter of an hour was like a long year. When I arrived home, I went to pay my respects to my mother and then entered my room. Yün stood up to welcome me, and we held each other's hands in silence, and it seemed then that our souls had melted away or evaporated like a mist. My ears tingled and I did not know where I was.

It was June, then, and the rooms were very hot. Luckily, we were next door to the Lotus Lover's Lodge of the Ts'anglang Pavilion on the east. Over the bridge, there was an open hall overlooking the water, called "After My Heart"—the reference was to an old poem: "When the water is clear, I will wash the tassels of my hat, and when the water is muddy, I will wash my feet." By the side of the eaves, there was an old tree which spread its green shade over the window, and made the people's faces look green with it; and across the creek, you could see people passing to and fro. This was where my father used to entertain

his guests. I asked for permission from my mother to bring Yün and stay there for the summer. She stopped embroidery during the summer months because of the heat, and the whole day long, we were either reading together, or discussing the ancient things, or else enjoying the moon and passing judgments on the flowers. Yün could not drink, but could take at most three cups when compelled to, and I taught her literary games in which the loser had to drink. We thought there could not be a more happy life on earth than this.

One day Yün asked me: "Of all the ancient authors, which one should we regard as the master?" And I replied: "*Chankuots'eh* and Chuangtse are noted for their agility of thought and expressiveness of style, K'uang Heng and Liu Hsiang are known for their classic severity, Szema Ch'ien and Pan Ku are known for their breadth of knowledge, Han Yü is known for his mellow qualities, Liu Tsungyüan for his rugged beauty, Ouyang Hsiu for his romantic abandon, and the Su's, father and sons, are known for their sustained eloquence. There are, besides, writings like the political essays of Chia Yi and Tung Chungshu, the euphuistic prose of Hsü Ling and Yü Hsin, the memorandums of Lu Chih, and others more than one can enumerate. True appreciation, however, must come from the reader himself."

"The ancient literature," Yün said, "depends for its appeal on depth of thought and greatness of spirit, which I am afraid it is difficult for a woman to attain. I believe, however, that I do understand something of poetry."

"Poetry was used," I said, "as a literary test in the imperial examinations of the T'ang Dynasty, and people acknowledge Li Po and Tu Fu as the master poets. Which of the two do you like better?"

"Tu's poems," she said, "are known for their workmanship and artistic refinement, while Li's poems are known for their freedom and naturalness of expression. I prefer the vivacity of Li Po to the severity of Tu Fu."

"Tu Fu is the acknowledged king of poets," said I, "and he is taken by most people as their model. Why do you prefer Li Po?"

"Of course," said she, "as for perfection of form and maturity of thought, Tu is the undisputed master, but Li Po's poems have the wayward charm of a nymph. His lines come naturally like falling flowers and flowing water, and are so much lovelier for their spontaneity. I am not saying that Tu is second to Li; only personally I feel, not that I love Tu less, but that I love Li more."

"I say, I didn't know that you are a bosom friend of Li Po!"

"I have still in my heart another poet, Po Chüyi, who is my first tutor, as it were, and I have not been able to forget him."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Isn't he the one who wrote the poem on *The P'i P'a Player*?"

"This is very strange," I laughed and said. "So Li Po is your bosom friend, Po Chüyi is your first tutor, and your husband's literary name is Sanpo. It seems that your life is always bound up with the Po's."

"It is all right," Yün smiled and replied, "to have one's life bound up with the Po's, only I am afraid I shall be writing Po characters all my life." (For in Soochow we call misspelt words "po characters.") And we both laughed.

"Now that you know poetry," I said, "I should like also to know your taste for *fu* poems."

"The *Ch'uts'e* is, of course, the fountainhead of *fu* poetry, but I find it difficult to understand. It seems to me that among the Han and Chin *fu* poets, Ssuma Hsiangju is most sublime in point of style and diction."

"Perhaps," I said, "Wenchün was tempted to elope with Hsiangju not because of his *ch'in* music, but rather because of his *fu* poetry," and we laughed again.

I am by nature unconventional and straightforward, but Yün was a stickler for forms, like the Confucian schoolmasters. Whenever I put on a dress for her or tidied up her sleeves, she would say "So much obliged" again and again, and when I passed her a towel or a fan, she must receive it standing up. At first I disliked this and said to her: "Do you mean to tie me down with all this ceremony? There is a proverb which says, 'One who is overcourteous is crafty.'" Yün blushed all over and said: "I am merely trying to be polite and respectful; why do you charge me with craftiness?" "True respect is in the heart, and does not require such empty forms," said I, but Yün said, "There is no more intimate relationship than that between children and their parents. Do you mean to say that children should behave freely towards their parents and keep their respect only in their heart?" "Oh! I was only joking," I said. "The trouble is," said Yün, "most marital troubles begin with joking. Don't you accuse me of disrespect later, for then I shall die of grief without being able to defend myself." Then I held her close to my breast and caressed her and then she smiled. From then on our conversations were full of 'I'm sorry's' and 'I beg your pardon's.' And so we remained courteous to each other for twenty-three years of our married life like Liang Hung and Meng Kuang of old, and the longer we stayed together, the more passionately attached we became to each other. Whenever we met each other in the house, whether it be in a dark room or in a narrow corridor, we used to hold each other's hands and ask: "Where are you going?" and we did this on the sly as if afraid that people might see us. As a matter of fact, we tried at first to avoid being seen



sitting or walking together, but after a while, we did not mind it any more. When Yün was sitting and talking with somebody and saw me come, she would rise and move sideways for me to sit down together with her. All this was done naturally almost without any consciousness, and although at first we felt uneasy about it, later on it became a matter of habit. I cannot understand why all old couples must hate each other like enemies. Some people say 'if they weren't enemies, they would not be able to live together until old age.' Well, I wonder!

On the seventh night of the seventh moon of that year [1780] Yün prepared incense, candles and some melons and fruits, so that we might together worship the Grandson of Heaven<sup>1</sup> in the Hall called "After My Heart." I had carved two seals with the inscription "That we might remain husband and wife from incarnation to incarnation." I kept the seal with positive characters, while she kept the one with negative characters, to be used in our correspondence. That night the moon was shining beautifully, and when I looked down at the creek, the ripples shone like golden chains. We were wearing light silk dresses and sitting together with a small fan in our hands, before the window overlooking the creek. Looking up at the sky, we saw the clouds sailing through the heavens, changing at every moment into a myriad forms, and Yün said: "This moon is common to the whole universe. I wonder if there is another pair of lovers quite as passionate as ourselves looking at the same moon to-night?" And I said: "Oh! there are plenty of people who will be sitting in the cool evening and looking at the moon, and perhaps also many women criticising or enjoying the clouds in their chambers; but when a husband and wife are looking at the moon together, I hardly think that the clouds will form the subject of their conversation." By and by, the candle-lights went out, the moon sank in the sky, and we removed the fruits and went to bed.

The fifteenth of the seventh moon was All Souls' Day. Yün prepared a little dinner, so that we could drink together with the moon as our company, but when night came, the sky was suddenly overcast with dark clouds. Yün knitted her brow and said: "If it be the wish of God that we two should live together until there are silver threads in our hair, then the moon must come out again to-night." On my part I felt disheartened also. As we looked across the creek, we saw will-o'-the-wisps flitting in crowds hither and thither like ten thousand candle-lights, threading their way through the willows and smartweeds. And then we began to compose a poem together, each saying two lines at a

<sup>1</sup> The seventh day of the seventh moon is the only day in the year when the pair of heavenly lovers, the Cowherd ("grandson of heaven") and the Spinning Maid are allowed to meet each other across the Milky Way.

time, the first completing the couplet which the other had begun, and the second beginning another couplet for the other to finish, and after a few rhymes, the longer we kept on, the more nonsensical it became, until it was a jumble of slapdash doggerel. By this time, Yün was buried amidst tears and laughter and choking on my breast, while I felt the fragrance of the jasmine in her hair assail my nostrils. I patted her on the shoulder and said jokingly, "I thought that the jasmine was used for decoration in women's hair because it was round like a pearl; I did not know that it is because its fragrance is so much finer when it is mixed with the smell of women's hair and powder. When it smells like that, even the citron cannot remotely compare with it." Then Yün stopped laughing and said: "The citron is the gentleman among the different fragrant plants because its fragrance is so slight that you can hardly detect it; on the other hand, the jasmine is a common fellow because it borrows its fragrance partly from others. Therefore, the fragrance of the jasmine is like that of a smiling sycophant." "Why, then," I said, "do you keep away from the gentleman and associate with the common fellow?" And Yün replied, "I am amused at the gentleman that loves the common fellow." While we were thus bandying words about, it was already midnight, and we saw the wind had blown away the clouds in the sky and there appeared the full moon, round like a chariot wheel, and we were greatly delighted. And so we began to drink by the side of the window, but before we had tasted three cups, we heard suddenly the noise of a splash under the bridge, as if someone had fallen into the water. We looked out through the window and saw there was not a thing, for the water was as smooth as a mirror, except that we heard the noise of a duck scampering in the marshes. I knew that there was a ghost of someone who had been drowned by the side of the Ts'anglang Pavilion, but knowing that Yün was very timid, dared not mention it to her. And Yün sighed and said: "Alas! Whence cometh this noise?" and we shuddered all over. Quickly we shut the window and carried the wine pot back into the room. A lamp light was then burning as small as a pea, and the curtains moved in the dark, and we were shaking all over. We then put out the light and went inside the bed curtain, and Yün already ran up a high fever. Soon I had a high temperature myself, and our illness dragged on for about twenty days. True it is that when the cup of happiness overflows, disaster follows, as the saying goes, and this was also an omen that we should not be able to live together until old age.

On the fifteenth of the eighth moon, or the Mid-Autumn Festival, I had just recovered from my illness. Yün had now been a bride in my home for over a year, but still had never been to the Ts'anglang Pavilion

itself next door. So I first ordered an old servant to tell the watchman not to let any visitors enter the place. Toward evening, I went with Yün and my younger sister, supported by an amah and a maid-servant, and led by an old attendant. We passed a bridge, entered a gate, turned eastwards and followed a zigzag path into the place, where we saw huge grottoes and abundant green trees. The Pavilion was situated on the top of a hill. Going up by the steps to the top, one could look around for miles, where in the distance chimney smoke arose from the cottages against the background of clouds of rainbow hues. Over the bank, there was a grove called the "Forest by the Hill" where the great officials used to entertain their guests. Later on, the Chengyi College was erected on this spot, but it wasn't there yet. We brought a blanket which we spread on the Pavilion floor, and then sat round together, while the watchman served us tea. After a while, the moon had already risen from behind the forest, and the breeze was playing about my sleeves, while the moon's image sparkled in the rippling water, and all worldly cares were banished from our breasts. "This is the end of a perfect day," said Yün. "Wouldn't it be fine if we could get a boat and row around the Pavilion!" At this time, the lights were already shining from people's homes, and thinking of the incident of the fifteenth night of the seventh moon, we left the Pavilion and hurried home. According to the custom at Soochow, the women of all families, big and small, came out in groups on the Mid-Autumn night, a custom which was called "pacing the moonlight." Strange to say, no one came to such a beautiful neighbourhood as the Ts'anglang Pavilion.

My father Chiafu was very fond of adopting children; hence I had twenty-six adopted brothers. My mother, too, had nine adopted daughters, of whom Miss Wang, the second, and Miss Yü, the sixth, were Yün's best friends. Wang was a kind of tom-boy and a great drinker, while Yü was straightforward and very fond of talking. When they came together, they used to chase me out, so that the three of them could sleep in the same bed. I knew Miss Yü was responsible for this, and once I said to her in fun: "When you get married, I am going to invite your husband to come and keep him for ten days." "I'll come here, too, then," said Miss Yü, "and sleep in the same bed with Yün. Won't that be fun?" At this Yün and Wang merely smiled.

At this time, my younger brother Ch'it'ang was going to get married, and we moved to Ts'angmi Alley by the Bridge of Drinking Horses. The house was quite big, but not so well furnished as the one by the Ts'anglang Pavilion. On the birthday of my mother, we had theatrical performances at home, and Yün at first thought them quite wonderful. Scorning all taboos, my father asked for the performance of a scene

called "Sad Parting," and the actors played so realistically that the audience were quite touched. I noticed across the screen that Yün suddenly got up and disappeared inside for a long time. I went in to see her and the Misses Yü and Wang also followed suit. There I saw Yün sitting alone before her dressing table, resting her head on an arm. "Why are you so sad?" I asked. "One sees a play for diversion," Yün said, "but to-day's play only breaks my heart." Both Wang and Yü were laughing at her, but I defended her. "She is touched because hers is a profoundly emotional soul." "Are you going to sit here all day long?" asked Miss Yü. "I'll stay here until some better selection is being played," Yün replied. Hearing this, Miss Wang left first and asked my mother to select more cheerful plays like *Ch'ihliang* and *Househ*. Then Yün was persuaded to come out and watch the play, which made her happy again.

My uncle Such'un died early without an heir, and my father made me succeed his line. His tomb was situated on Longevity Hill in Hsi-k'uatang by the side of our ancestral tombs, and it was our custom to go and visit the grave every spring. As there was a beautiful garden called Koyüan in its neighbourhood, Miss Wang begged to come with us. Yün saw that the pebbles on this hill had beautiful grains of different colours, and said to me: "If we were to collect these pebbles and make them into a grotto, it would be even more artistic than one made of Hsüanchow stones." I expressed the fear that there might not be enough of this kind. "If Yün really likes them, I'll pick them for you," said Miss Wang. So we borrowed a bag from the watchman, and went along collecting them. Whenever she saw one, she would ask for my opinion. If I said 'good,' she would pick it; and if I said 'no,' she would discard it. Very soon we had a fairly full bag and Miss Wang was perspiring all over. "If we get any more, we shan't be able to carry them home," she said. "I have been told," said Yün, as we were going alone, "that mountain fruits must be gathered by monkeys, which seems quite true." Miss Wang was furious and stretched both hands as if to scratch her. I stopped her and said to Yün by way of reproof: "You cannot blame her for being angry, because she is doing all the work and you stand by and say such unkind things." Then on our way back, we visited the Koyüan Garden, in which we saw a profusion of flowers of all colours. Wang was very childish; she would break a flower branch for no reason, and Yün scolded her, saying: "You are not going to put it in a vase or in your hair. Why destroy flowers like that?" "Oh! what's the harm? These flowers don't feel anything." "All right," I said, "you will be punished for this one day by marrying a pock-marked bearded fellow for your husband to avenge the flowers." Wang looked at me in anger,

threw the flowers to the ground, and kicked them into the pond. "Why do you all bully me?" she said. However, Yün made it up with her, and she was finally pacified.

Yün was at first very quiet and loved to hear me talk, but I gradually taught her the art of conversation as one leads a cricket with a blade of grass. She then gradually learnt the art of conversation. For instance, at meals, she always mixed her rice with tea, and loved to eat stale pickled bean-curd, called 'stinking bean-curd' in Soochow. Another thing she liked to eat was a kind of small pickled cucumber. I hated both of these things, and said to her in fun one day: "The dog, which has no stomach, eats human refuse because it doesn't know that refuse stinks, while the beetle rolls in dunghills and is changed into a cicada because it wants to fly up to heaven. Now are you a dog or a beetle?" To this Yün replied: "One eats bean-curd because it is so cheap and it goes with dry rice as well as with congee. I am used to this from childhood. Now I am married into your home, like a beetle that has been transformed into a cicada, but I am still eating it because one should not forget old friends. As for pickled cucumber, I tasted it for the first time in your home." "Oh, then, my home is a dog's kennel, isn't it?" Yün was embarrassed and tried to explain it away by saying: "Of course there is refuse in every home; the only difference is whether one eats it or not. You yourself eat garlic, for instance, and I have tried to eat it with you. I won't compel you to eat stinking bean-curd, but cucumber is really very nice, if you hold your breath while eating. You will see when you have tasted it yourself. It is like Wuyien, an ugly but virtuous woman." "Are you going to make me a dog?" I asked. "Well, I have been a dog for a long time, why don't you try to be one?" So she picked one with her chopsticks and pushed it into my mouth. I held my breath and ate it and found it indeed delicious. Then I ate it in the usual way and found it to have a marvellous flavour. And from that time on, I loved the cucumber also. Yün also prepared pickled bean-curd mixed with sesame seed oil and sugar, which I found also to be a delicacy. We then mixed pickled cucumber with pickled bean-curd and called the mixture 'the double-flavoured gravy.' I said I could not understand why I disliked it at first and began to love it so now. "If you are in love with a thing, you will forget its ugliness," said Yün.

My younger brother Ch'it'ang married the daughter of Wang Hsi-chou. It happened that on the wedding day, she wanted some pearls. Yün took her own pearls, which she had received as her bridal gift, and gave them to her mother. The maid-servant thought it a pity, but Yün said: "A woman is an incarnation of the female principle, and so are pearls. For a woman to wear pearls would be to leave no room for the

male principle. For that reason I don't prize them." She had, however, a peculiar fondness for old books and broken slips of painting. Whenever she saw odd volumes of books, she would try to sort them out, arrange them in order, and have them rebound properly. These were collected and labelled "Ancient Relics." When she saw scrolls of calligraphy or painting that were partly spoilt, she would find some old paper and paste them up nicely, and ask me to fill up the broken spaces.<sup>2</sup> These were kept rolled up properly and called "Beautiful Gleanings." This was what she was busy about the whole day when she was not attending to the kitchen or needlework. When she found in old trunks or piles of musty volumes any writing or painting that pleased her, she felt as if she had discovered some precious relic, and an old woman neighbour of ours, by the name of Feng, used to buy up old scraps and sell them to her. She had the same tastes and habits as myself, and besides had the talent of anticipating my wishes, doing things without being told, and doing them to my perfect satisfaction.

Once I said to her: "It is a pity that you were born a woman. If you were a man, we could travel together and visit all the famous places of the world."

"Oh! this is not so very difficult," said Yün. "Wait till I am middle-aged. Even if I cannot accompany you to the five sacred mountains then, we can travel to the nearer places, like Huch'iu and Lingyen, as far south as the West Lake and as far north as P'ingshan [in Yangchow]."

"Of course this is all right; except that I am afraid when you are middle-aged you will be too old to travel."

"If I can't do it in this life, then I shall do it in the next."

"In the next life, you must be born a man and I will be your wife."

"It will be quite beautiful if we can then still remember what has happened in this life."

"That's all very well, but even a bowl of congee has provided material for so much conversation. We shan't be able to sleep a wink the whole wedding night, but shall be discussing what we have done in the previous existence, if we can still remember what's happened in this life then."

"It is said that the Old Man under the Moon is in charge of matrimony," said Yün. "He was good enough to make us husband and wife in this life, and we shall still depend on his favour in the affair of marriage in the next incarnation. Why don't we make a painting of him and worship him in our home?"

So we asked a Mr. Ch'i Liut'i, who specialised in portraiture, to make

<sup>2</sup> The author was a painter, and for a time painted for his living. Some of his paintings still remain.

a painting of the Old Man under the Moon, which he did. It was a picture of the Old Man holding a red silk thread in one hand and a walking-stick with the Book of Matrimony suspended from it in the other. He had white hair and a ruddy complexion, apparently bustling about in a cloudy region. Altogether it was a very excellent painting of Ch'i's. My friend Shih Chot'ang wrote some words on it and we hung the picture in our chamber. On the first and fifteenth of every month, we burnt incense and prayed together before him. I do not know where this picture is now, after all the changes and upsets in our family life. "Ended is the present life and uncertain the next," as the poet says. I wonder if God will listen to the prayer of us two silly lovers.

After we had moved to Ts'angmi Alley, I called our bedroom the "Tower of Guests' Fragrance," with a reference to Yün's name,<sup>3</sup> and to the story of Liang Hung and Meng Kuang who as husband and wife were always courteous to each other "like guests." We rather disliked the house because the walls were too high and the courtyard was too small. At the back, there was another house, leading to the library. Looking out of the window at the back, one could see the old garden of Mr. Lu, then in a dilapidated condition. Yün's thoughts still hovered about the beautiful scenery of the Ts'anglang Pavilion.

At this time, there was an old peasant woman living on the east of Mother Gold's Bridge and the north of Kenghsiang. Her little cottage was surrounded on all sides by vegetable fields and had a wicker gate. Outside the gate, there was a pond about thirty yards across, surrounded by a wilderness of trees on all sides. This was the old site of the home of Chang Shihch'eng of the Yüan Dynasty. A few paces to the west of the cottage, there was a mound filled with broken bricks, from the top of which one could command a view of the surrounding territory, which was an open country with a stretch of wild vegetation. Once the old woman happened to mention the place, and Yün kept on thinking about it. So she said to me one day: "Since leaving the Ts'anglang Pavilion, I have been dreaming about it all the time. As we cannot live there, we must put up with the second best. I have a great idea to go and live in the old woman's cottage." "I have been thinking, too," I said, "of a place to go to and spend the long summer days. If you think you'll like the place, I'll go ahead and take a look. If it is satisfactory, we can carry our bedding along and go and stay there for a month. How about it?" "I'm afraid mother won't allow us." "Oh! I'll see to that," I told her. So the next day, I went there and found that the cottage consisted only of two rooms, which could be partitioned into four. With paper windows and bamboo beds, the house would be quite a delightfully

<sup>3</sup> "Yün" in Chinese means a fragrant weed.

cool place to stay in. The old woman knew what I wanted and gladly rented me her bedroom, which then looked quite new, when I had repapered the walls. I then informed my mother of it and went to stay there with Yün.

Our only neighbours were an old couple who raised vegetables for the market. They knew that we were going to stay there for the summer, and came and called on us, bringing us some fish from the pond and vegetables from their own fields. We offered to pay for them, but as they wouldn't take any money, Yün made a pair of shoes for them, which they were finally persuaded to accept. This was in July when the trees cast a green shade over the place. The summer breeze blew over the water of the pond, and cicadas filled the air with their singing the whole day. Our old neighbour also made a fishing line for us, and we used to angle together under the shade. Late in the afternoons, we would go up on the mound to look at the evening glow and compose lines of poetry, when we felt so inclined. Two of the lines were:

"Beast-clouds swallow the sinking sun,  
And the bow-moon shoots the falling stars."

After a while, the moon cut her image in the water, insects began to cry all round, and we placed a bamboo bed near the hedgerow to sit or lie upon. The old woman then would inform us that wine had been warmed up and dinner prepared, and we would sit down to have a little drink under the moon. After we had a bath, we would put on our slippers and carry a fan, and lie or sit there, listening to old tales of retribution told by our neighbour. When we came in to sleep about midnight, we felt our whole body nice and cool, almost forgetting that we were living in a city.

There along the hedgerow, we asked the gardener to plant chrysanthemums. The flowers bloomed in the ninth moon, and we continued to stay there for another ten days. My mother was also quite delighted and came to see us there. So we ate crabs in the midst of chrysanthemums and whiled away the whole day. Yün was quite enchanted with all this and said: "Some day we must build a cottage here. We'll buy ten *mu* of ground, and around it we'll plant vegetables and melons for our food. You will paint and I will do embroidery, from which we could make enough money to buy wine and compose poems over dinners. Thus, clad in simple gowns and eating simple meals, we could live a very happy life together without going anywhere." I fully agreed with her. Now the place is still there, while the one who knows my heart is dead. Alas! such is life!

About half a *li* from my home, there was a temple to the God of



Tungt'ing Lake, popularly known as the Narcissus Temple, situated in the Ch'uk'u Alley. It had many winding corridors and a small garden with pavilions. On the birthday of the God, every clan would be assigned a corner in the Temple, where they would hang beautiful glass lamps of a kind, with a table in the centre, on which were placed vases on wooden stands. These vases were decorated with flowers for competition. In the day time, there would be theatrical performances, while at night the flower-vases were brilliantly illuminated with candlelights, a custom which was called "Illuminated Flowers." With the flowers and the lanterns and the smell of incense, the whole place resembled a night feast in the Palace of the Dragon King. The people there would sing or play music, or gossip over their tea-cups. The audience stood around in crowds to look at the show and there was a railing at the curb to keep them within a certain limit.

I was asked by my friend to help in the decorations and so had the pleasure of taking part in it. When Yün heard me speaking about it at home, she remarked: "It is a pity that I am not a man and cannot go to see it." "Why, you could put on my cap and gown and disguise yourself as man," I suggested. Accordingly she changed her coiffure into a queue, painted her eyebrows, and put on my cap. Although her hair showed slightly round the temples, it passed off tolerably well. As my gown was found to be an inch and a half too long, she tucked it round the waist and put on a *makua* on top. "What am I going to do about my feet?" she asked. I told her there was a kind of shoes called "butterfly shoes," which could fit any size of feet and were very easy to obtain at the shops, and suggested buying a pair for her, which she could also use as slippers later on at home. Yün was delighted with the idea, and after supper, when she had finished her make-up, she paced about the room, imitating the gestures and gait of a man for a long time, when all of a sudden she changed her mind and said: "I am not going! It would be so embarrassing if somebody should discover me, and besides, our parents would object." Still I urged her to go. "Who doesn't know me at the Temple?" I said. "Even if they should find it out, they would laugh it off as a joke. Mother is at present in the home of the ninth sister. We could steal away and back without letting anyone know about it."

Yün then had such fun looking at herself in the mirror. I dragged her along and we stole away together to the Temple. For a long time nobody in the Temple could detect it. When people asked, I simply said she was my boy cousin, and people would merely curtsy with their hands together and pass on. Finally, we came to a place where there were some young women and girls sitting behind the flower show. They were the family of the owner of that show, by the name of Yang.

Yün suddenly went over to talk with them, and while talking, she casually leant over and touched the shoulder of a young woman. The maid-servants near by shouted angrily: "How dare the rascal!" I attempted to explain and smooth the matter over, but the servants still scowled ominously on us, and seeing that the situation was desperate, Yün took off her cap and showed her feet, saying, "Look here, I am a woman, too!" They all stared at each other in surprise, and then, instead of being angry, began to laugh. We were then asked to sit down and have some tea. Soon afterwards we got sedan chairs and came home.

When Mr. Ch'ien Shihcho of Wukiang died of an illness, my father wrote a letter to me, asking me to go and attend the funeral. Yün secretly expressed her desire to come along, since on our way to Wukiang, we would pass the Taihu Lake, which she wished very much to see. I told her that I was just thinking it would be too lonely for me to go alone, and that it would be excellent, indeed, if she could come along, except that I could not think of a pretext for her going. "Oh! I could say that I am going to see my mother," Yün said. "You can go ahead, and I shall come along to meet you." "If so," I said, "we can tie up our boat beneath the Bridge of Ten Thousand Years on our way home, where we shall be able to look at the moon again as we did at the Ts'anglang Pavilion."

This was on the eighteenth day of the sixth moon. That day, I brought a servant and arrived first at Hsükiang Ferry, where I waited for her in the boat. By and by, Yün arrived in a sedan chair, and we started off, passing by the Tiger's Roar Bridge, where the view opened up and I saw sailing boats and birds on the sand-banks. The water was a white stretch, joining the sky at the horizon. "So this is Taihu!" Yün exclaimed. "I know now how big the universe is, and I have not lived in vain! I think a good many ladies never see such a view in their whole lifetime." As we were occupied in conversation, it wasn't very long before we saw swaying willows on the banks, and we knew we had arrived at Wukiang.

I went up to attend the funeral ceremony, but when I came back, Yün was not in the boat. I asked the boatman and he said: "Don't you see someone under the willow trees by the bridge, watching the cormorants catching fish?" Yün, then, had gone up with the boatman's daughter. I followed her there, and saw that she was perspiring all over, still leaning on the boatman's daughter and standing there absorbed looking at the cormorants. I patted her shoulder and said, "You are wet through." Yün turned her head and said, "I was afraid that your friend Ch'ien might come to the boat, so I left to avoid him. Why did you come back so early?" "In order to catch the renegade!" I replied.

We then came back hand-in-hand to the boat, and when we stopped

at the Bridge of Ten Thousand Years, the sun had not yet gone down. And we let down all the windows to allow the river breeze to come in, and there, dressed in light silk and holding a fan, we sliced a melon to cool ourselves. Soon the evening glow was casting a red hue over the bridge, and the distant haze enveloped the willow trees in darkness. The moon then came up, and all along the river we saw a stretch of lights coming from the fishing boats. I asked my servant to go astern and have a drink with the boatman.

The boatman's daughter was called Suyün. She was quite a likeable girl, and I had known her before. I beckoned her to come and sit together with Yün on the bow of the boat. We did not put on any light, so that we could the better enjoy the moon, and there we sat drinking and playing literary games with wine as forfeit. Suyün just stared at us, listening for a long time before she said: "Now I am quite familiar with all sorts of wine-games, but have never heard of this one. Will you explain it to me?" Yün tried to explain it by all sorts of analogies to her but still she failed to understand. Then I laughed and said: "Will the lady teacher please stop a moment? I have a parable for explaining it, and she will understand at once." "You try it, then!" "The stork," I said, "can dance, but cannot plough, while the buffalo can plough but cannot dance. That lies in the nature of things. You are making a fool of yourself by trying to teach the impossible to her." Suyün pummelled my shoulder playfully, and Yün said: "Hereafter let's make a rule: let's have it out with our mouths, but no hands! One who breaks the rule will have to drink a big cup." As Suyün was a great drinker, she filled a cup full and drank it up at a draught. "I suggest that one may be allowed to use one's hands for caressing, but not for striking," I said. Yün then playfully pushed Suyün into my lap, saying, "Now you can caress her to your full." "How stupid of you!" I laughed in reply. "The beauty of caressing lies in doing it naturally and half unconsciously. Only a country bumpkin will hug and caress a woman roughly." I noticed that the jasmine in her hair gave out a strange fragrance, mixed with the flavour of wine, powder and hair lotion, and remarked to her: "The 'mean little fellow' stinks all over the place. It makes me sick." Hearing this, Suyün struck me with her fist in a rage, saying:

"Who told you to smell it?"

"She breaks the rule! Two cups!" Yün shouted.

"He called me 'mean little fellow.' Why shouldn't I strike him?" explained Suyün.

"He really means by the 'mean little fellow' something which you don't understand. You finish these two cups first and I'll tell you."

When Suyün had finished the two cups, Yün told her of our discussion about the jasmine at the Ts'anglang Pavilion.

"Then the mistake is mine. I must be penalised again," said Suyün. And she drank a third cup.

Yün said then that she had long heard of her reputation as a singer and would like to hear her sing. This Suyün did beautifully, beating time with her ivory chop-sticks on a little plate. Yün drank merrily until she was quite drunk, when she took a sedan-chair and went home first, while I remained chatting with Suyün for a moment and then walked home under the moonlight.

At this time, we were staying in the home of our friend Lu Panfang, in a house called Hsiaoshuanglou. A few days afterwards, Mrs. Lu heard of the story from someone, and secretly told Yün: "Do you know that your husband was drinking a few days ago at the Bridge of Ten Thousand Years with two sing-song girls?" "Yes, I do," replied Yün, "and one of the sing-song girls was myself." Then she told her the whole story and Mrs. Lu had a good laugh at herself.

When I came back from eastern Kwangtung in July, 1794, there was a cousin of mine, by the name of Hsü Hsiufeng, who had brought home with him a concubine. He was crazy about her beauty and asked Yün to go and see her. After seeing her, Yün remarked to Hsiufeng one day, "She has beauty, but no charm." "Do you mean to say that when your husband takes a concubine, she must have both beauty and charm?" answered Hsiufeng. Yün replied in the affirmative. So from that time on, she was quite bent on finding a concubine for me, but was short of cash.

At this time there was a Chekiang sing-song girl by the name of Wen Lenghsiang, who was staying at Soochow. She had composed four poems on the Willow Catkins which were talked about all over the city, and many scholars wrote poems in reply, using the same rhyme-words as her originals, as was the custom. There was a friend of mine, Hsienhan of Wukiang, who was a good friend of Lenghsiang and brought her poems to me, asking me to write some in reply. Yün wasn't interested because she did not think much of her, but I was intrigued and composed one on the flying willow catkins which filled the air in May. Two lines which Yün liked very much were:

"They softly touch the spring sorrow in my bosom,  
And gently stir the longings in her heart."

On the fifth day of the eighth moon in the following year, my mother was going to see Huch'iu with Yün, when Hsienhan suddenly appeared and said: "I am going to Huch'iu, too. Will you come along with me

and see a beautiful sing-song girl?" I told my mother to go ahead and agreed to meet her at Pant'ang near Huch'iu. My friend then dragged me to Lenghsiang's place. I saw that Lenghsiang was already in her middle-age, but she had a girl by the name of Hanyüan, who was a very sweet young maiden, still in her 'teens. Her eyes looked like an autumn lake that cooled one by its cold splendour. After talking with her for a while, I learnt that she knew how to read and write. There was also a younger sister of hers, by the name of Wenyüan, who was still a mere child. I had then no thought of going with a sing-song girl, fully realizing that, as a poor scholar, I could not afford to give a feast in return. But since I was there already, I tried to get along as best I could.

"Are you trying to seduce me?" I said to Hsienhan secretly.

"No," he replied, "someone had invited me to-day to a dinner in Hanyüan's place in return for a previous dinner. It happened that the host himself was invited by an important person, and I am acting in his place. Don't you worry!"

I felt then quite relieved. Arriving at Pant'ang, we met my mother's boat, and I asked Hanyüan to go over to her boat and meet Yün. When Yün and Han met each other, they instinctively took to each other like old friends, and later they went hand-in-hand to see the famous hill. Yün was especially fond of a place called "A Thousand Acres of Cloud," and she remained there for a long time, lost in admiration of the scenery. We returned to the Bank of Rural Fragrance where we tied up the boats and had a jolly drinking party together.

When we started on our way home, Yün said: "Will you please go over to the other boat with your friend, while I share this one with Han?" We did as she suggested, and I did not return to my boat until we had passed the Tut'ing Bridge, where we parted from my friend and Hanyüan. It was midnight by the time we returned home.

"Now I have found a girl who has both beauty and charm," Yün said to me. "I have already asked Hanyüan to come and see us to-morrow, and I'll arrange it for you." I was taken by surprise.

"You know we are not a wealthy family. We can't afford to keep a girl like that, and we are so happily married. Why do you want to find somebody else?"

"But I love her," said Yün smilingly. "You just leave it to me."

The following afternoon, Hanyüan actually came. Yün was very cordial to her and prepared a feast, and we played the finger-guessing game and drank, but during the whole dinner, not a word was mentioned about securing her for me. When Hanyüan had gone, Yün said, "I have secretly made another appointment with her to come on the eighteenth, when we will pledge ourselves as sisters. You must prepare

a sacrificial offering for the occasion;" and pointing to the bracelet on her arm, she continued, "If you see this bracelet appear on Hanyüan's arm, you'll understand that she has consented. I have already hinted at it to her, but we haven't got to know each other as thoroughly as I should like to yet." I had to let her have her own way.

On the eighteenth, Hanyüan turned up in spite of a pouring rain. She disappeared in the bedroom for a long time before she came out hand-in-hand with Yün. When she saw me, she felt a little shy, for the bracelet was already on her arm. After we had burnt incense and pledged an oath, we continued to drink again. It happened that Hanyüan had an engagement to go and visit Shih-hu Lake, and soon she left.

Yün came to me all smiles and said, "Now that I have found a beauty for you, how are you going to reward the go-between?" I asked her for the details.

"I had to broach the topic delicately to her," she said, "because I was afraid that she might have someone else in mind. Now I have learnt that there isn't anyone, and I asked her, 'Do you understand why we have this dinner to-day?' 'I should feel greatly honoured if I could come to your home, but my mother is expecting a lot of me and I can't decide by myself. We will watch and see,' she replied. As I was putting on the bracelet, I told her again, 'The jade is chosen for its hardness as a token of fidelity and the bracelet's roundness is a symbol of everlasting faithfulness. Meanwhile, please put it on as a token of our pledge.' She replied that everything depended on her mother. So it seems that she is willing herself. The only difficulty is her mother, Lenghsiang. We will wait and see how it turns out."

"Are you going to enact the comedy *Linhsiangpan* of Li Liweng right in our home?"

"Yes!" Yün replied.

From that time on, not a day passed without her mentioning Hanyüan's name. Eventually Hanyüan was married by force to some influential person, and our arrangements did not come off. And Yün actually died of grief on this account.

## CHAPTER II: THE LITTLE PLEASURES OF LIFE

I REMEMBER that when I was a child, I could stare at the sun with wide, open eyes. I could see the tiniest objects, and loved to observe the fine grains and patterns of small things, from which I derived a romantic, unworldly pleasure. When mosquitoes were humming round in summer, I transformed them in my imagination into a company of storks dancing in the air. And when I regarded them that way, they were real

storks to me, flying by the hundreds and thousands, and I would look up at them until my neck was stiff. Again, I kept a few mosquitoes inside a white curtain and blew a puff of smoke round them, so that to me they became a company of white storks flying among the clouds, and their humming was to me the song of storks singing in high heaven, which delighted me intensely. Sometimes I would squat by a broken, earthen wall, or by a little bush on a raised flower-bed, with my eyes on the same level as the flower-bed itself, and there I would look and look, transforming in my mind the little plot of grass into a forest and the ants and insects into wild animals. The little elevations on the ground became my hills, and the depressed areas became my valleys, and my spirit wandered in that world at leisure. One day, I saw two little insects fighting among the grass, and while I was all absorbed watching the fight, there suddenly appeared a big monster, overturning my hills and tearing up my forest—it was a little frog. With one lick of his tongue, he swallowed up the two little insects. I was so lost in my young imaginary world that I was taken unawares and quite frightened. When I had recovered myself, I caught the frog, struck it several dozen times and chased it out of the courtyard. Thinking of this incident afterwards when I was grown up, I understood that these two little insects were committing adultery by rape. "The wages of sin is death," so says an ancient proverb, and I wondered whether it was true of the insects also. I was a naughty boy, and once my ball (for we call the genital organ a 'ball' in Soochow) was bitten by an earthworm and became swollen. [Believing that the duck's saliva would act as an antidote for insect bites,] they held a duck over it, but the maid-servant, who was holding the duck, accidentally let her hand go, and the duck was going to swallow it. I got frightened and screamed. People used to tell this story to make fun of me. These were the little incidents of my childhood days.

When I was grown up, I loved flowers very much and was very fond of training pot flowers and flower trees. When I knew Chang Lanp'o, I learnt from him the secrets of trimming branches and protecting joints, and later the art of grafting trees and making rockeries. The orchid was prized most among all the flowers because of its subdued fragrance and graceful charm, but it was difficult to obtain really good classic varieties. When Lanp'o died, he presented me with a pot of spring orchids, whose flowers had lotus-shaped petals; the centre of the flowers was broad and white, the petals were very neat and even at the "shoulders," and the stems were very slender. This type was classical, and I prized it like a piece of old jade. When I was working away from home, Yün used to take care of it personally, and it grew beautifully. After two years, it died suddenly one day. I dug up its roots and found that they were white

like marble, while nothing was wrong with the sprouts, either. At first, I could not understand this, but ascribed it with a sigh merely to my own bad luck, which might be unworthy to keep such flowers. Later on, I found out that someone had asked for some of the flowers from the same pot, had been refused, and had therefore killed it by pouring boiling water over it. Thenceforth I swore I would never grow orchids again.

Next in preference came the azalea. Although it had no smell, its flowers lasted a long time and were very beautiful to look at, in addition to its being easy to train up. Because Yün loved these flowers so much, she would not stand for too much cutting and trimming, and that was the reason why it was difficult to make them grow into trees. The same thing was true of the other pot flowers.

The chrysanthemum, however, was my passion in the autumn of every year. I loved to arrange these flowers in vases, but not to raise them in pots, not because I did not want to have them that way, but because I had no garden in my home and could not take care of them myself. What I bought at the market were not properly trained and not to my liking. When arranging chrysanthemum flowers in vases, one should take an odd, not an even, number, and each vase should have flowers of only one colour. The mouth of the vase should be broad, so that the flowers can lie easily together. Whether there be half a dozen flowers or even thirty or forty of them in a vase, they should be so arranged as to come up together straight from the mouth of the vase, neither overcrowded, nor too much spread out, nor leaning against the mouth of the vase. This is called "keeping the handle firm." Sometimes they can stand gracefully erect, and sometimes spread out in different directions. In order to avoid a bare monotonous effect, they should be mixed with some flower buds and arranged in a kind of studied disorderliness. The leaves should not be too thick and the stems should not be too stiff. In using pins to hold the stems up, one should break the long pins off, rather than expose them. This is called "keeping the mouth of the vase clear." Place from three to seven vases on a table, depending on the size of the latter, for if there were too many of them, they would be overcrowded, looking like chrysanthemum screens at the market. The stands for the vases should be of different height, from three to four inches to two and a half feet, so that the different vases at different heights would balance one another and belong intimately to one another as in a picture with unity of composition. To put one vase low in the centre with two high at the sides, or to put a low one in front and a tall one behind, or to arrange them in symmetrical pairs, would be to create what is vulgarly called "a heap of gorgeous refuse." Proper spacing and



arrangement must depend on the individual who has an understanding of pictorial composition.

In the case of flower bowls or open dishes, the method of making a support for the flowers is to mix refined resin with elm bark, flour and oil, and heat up the mixture with hot hay ashes until it becomes a kind of glue, and with it glue some nails upside down on to a piece of copper. This copper plate can then be heated up and glued on to the bottom of the bowl or dish. When it is cold, tie the flowers in groups by means of wire and stick them on those nails. The flowers should be allowed to incline sideways and not shoot up from the centre; it is also important that the stems and leaves should not come too closely together. After this is done, put some water in the bowl and cover up the copper support with some clean sand, so that the flowers will seem to grow directly from the bottom of the bowl.

When picking branches from flower trees for decoration in vases, it is important to know how to trim them before putting them in the vase, for one cannot always go and pick them oneself, and those picked by others are often unsatisfactory. Hold the branch in your hand and turn it back and forth in different ways in order to see how it lies most expressively. After one has made up one's mind about it, lop off the superfluous branches, with the idea of making the twig look thin and sparse and quaintly beautiful. Next think how the stem is going to lie in the vase and with what kind of bend, so that when it is put there, the leaves and flowers can be shown to the best advantage. If one just takes any old branch in hand, chooses a straight section and puts it in the vase, the consequence will be that the stem will be too stiff, the branches will be too close together and the flowers and leaves will be turned in the wrong direction, devoid of all charm and expression. To make a straight twig crooked, cut a mark halfway across the stem and insert a little piece of broken brick or stone at the joint; the straight branch will then become a bent one. In case the stem is too weak, put one or two pins to strengthen it. By means of this method, even maple leaves and bamboo twigs or even ordinary grass and thistles will look very well for decoration. Put a twig of green bamboo side by side with a few berries of Chinese matrimony vines, or arrange some fine blades of grass together with some branches of thistle. They will look quite poetic, if the arrangement is correct.

In planting new trees, it does not matter if the trunk comes up from the ground at an angle, for if let alone for a year, it will grow upwards by itself. On the other hand, if one lets the stem come up in a perpendicular line, it will be difficult later on for it to have a dynamic posture. As to the training of pot flowers, one should choose those with claw-

like roots coming above the surface of the ground. Lop off the first three branches from the ground before allowing the next one to grow up, making a bend at every point where a new branch starts off. There should be seven such bends, or perhaps nine, from the lower end of a tree to its top. It is against good taste to have swollen joints at these bends, or to have two branches growing directly opposite each other at the same point. These must branch off in all directions from different points, for if one only allows those on the right and left to grow up, the effect will be very bare, or "the chest and back will be exposed," as we say. Nor, for instance, should they grow straight from the front or behind. There are "double-trunked" and "treble-trunked" trees which all spring from the same root above the ground. If the root were not claw-shaped, they would look like planted sticks and would on that account be disqualified.

The proper training of a tree, however, takes at least thirty to forty years. In my whole life, I have seen only one person, old Wan Ts'aichang of my district, who succeeded in training several trees in his life. Once I also saw at the home of a merchant at Yangchow two pots, one of boxwood and one of cypress, presented to him by a friend from Yüshan, but this was like casting pearls before swine. Outside these cases, I have not seen any really good ones. Trees whose branches are trained in different horizontal circles going up like a pagoda or whose branches turn round and round like earthworms are incurably vulgar.

When arranging miniature sceneries with flowers and stones in a pot, design so that a small one could suggest a painting, and a big one the infinite. One should make it so that, with a pot of tea, one could lose oneself in a world of imagination; and only this kind should be kept in one's private studio for enjoyment. Once I planted some narcissus and could not find any pebbles from Lingpi for use in the pot, and I substituted them with pieces of coal that looked like rocks. One can also take five or seven pea sprouts of different size, and plant them in sand in an oblong earthen basin, decorated with charcoal instead of pebbles. The black of the charcoal will then contrast vividly with the white of the pea sprouts, quite interesting to look at. It is impossible to enumerate all the possible variations, but if one exercises one's ingenuity, it will be found to be an endless source of pleasure. For instance, one can take some calamus seeds in the mouth, chew them together with cold rice soup, and blow them on to pieces of charcoal. Keep them in a dark damp place and fine little calamus will grow from them. These pieces of charcoal can then be placed in any flower basin, looking like moss-covered rocks. Or one can take some old lotus seeds, grind off slightly both ends, and put them in an egg-shell, making a hen sit on

it together with other eggs. When the little chickens are hatched, take the egg out also and plant the old lotus seeds in old clay from swallows' nests, prepared with twenty per cent. of ground asparagus. Keep these then in a small vessel filled with river water, and expose them to the morning sun. When the flowers bloom, they will be only the size of a wine cup, while the leaves will be about the size of a bowl, very cute and beautiful to look at.

As to the planning of garden pavilions, towers, winding corridors and out-houses, the designing of rockery and the training of flower-trees, one should try to show the small in the big, and the big in the small, and provide for the real in the unreal and for the unreal in the real. One reveals and conceals alternately, making it sometimes apparent and sometimes hidden. This is not just rhythmic irregularity, nor does it depend on having a wide space and great expenditure of labour and material. Pile up a mound with earth dug from the ground, and decorate it with rocks, mingled with flowers; use live plum-branches for your fence, and plant creepers over the walls. Thus one can create the effect of a hill out of a flat piece of ground. In the big, open spaces, plant bamboos that grow quickly and train plum-trees with thick branches to screen them off. This is to show the small in the big. When a courtyard is small, the wall should run in convex and concave lines, decorated with green, covered with ivy and inlaid with big slabs of stone with inscriptions on them. Thus when you open your window, you seem to face a rocky hillside, alive with rugged beauty. This is to show the big in the small. Contrive so that an apparently blind alley leads suddenly into an open space and a kitchen leads through a backdoor into an unexpected courtyard. This is to provide for the real in the unreal. Let a door lead into a blind courtyard and conceal the view by placing a few bamboo trees and a few rocks before it. Thus you suggest something which is not there. Place low balustrades along the top of a wall so as to suggest a roof garden. This is to provide for the unreal in the real.

Poor scholars who live in crowded houses should follow the methods of the boatmen in our native district who make clever arrangements with their limited space on the bows of their boats by devising certain modifications, such as making a series of successive elevations one after another, and using them as beds, of which there may be three in a little room, and separating them with papered wooden partitions. The effect will be compact and wonderful to look at, like surveying a long stretch of road, and one will not feel the cramping of space. When my wife and I were staying at Yangchow, we lived in a house of only two beams. but the two bedrooms, the kitchen and the parlour were all arranged in

this method, with an exquisite effect and great saving of space. Yün once said to me laughingly, "The arrangements are exquisite enough, but after all, they lack the luxurious atmosphere of a rich man's house." It was so indeed.

Once I visited my ancestral tombs on the hill and found some pebbles of great beauty, with faint tracings on them. On coming back, I talked it over with Yün, and said: "People mix putty with Hsüanchow stones in white stone basins, because the colours of the two elements blend. These yellow pebbles of this hill, however, are different, and although they are rugged and simple, they will not blend in colour with putty. What can we do?" "Take some of the worst quality," she said, "pound them into small pieces and mix them in the putty before it is dry, and perhaps when it is dry, the colour will be uniform." So we did as she suggested, and took a rectangular Yihsing earthen basin, on which we piled up a mountain peak on the left coming down in undulations to the right. On its back, we made rugged square lines in the style of rock paintings of Ni Yünlin, so that the whole looked like a rocky precipice overhanging a river. At one corner we made a hollow place, which we filled with mud and planted with multi-leaf white duckweed, while the rocks were planted with dodder. This took us quite a few days to finish. In late autumn, the dodder grew all over the hill, like wistarias hanging down from a rock. The red dodder flowers made a striking contrast to the white duckweed, which had grown luxuriantly, too, from the pond underneath. Looking at it, one could imagine oneself transported to some fairy region. We put this under the eaves, and discussed between ourselves where we should build a pavilion by the water, where we should put a farmer's hut, and where we should put a stone inscription: "Where petals fall and waters flow." And Yün further discussed with me where we could build our home, where we could fish, and where we could go up for a better view of the distance, all so absorbed in it as if we were moving to live in that little imaginary universe. One night, two cats were fighting for food and the whole thing fell down from the eaves, broken into pieces, basin and all. I sighed and said, "The gods seem to be jealous of even such a little effort of ours." And we both shed tears.

To burn incense in a quiet room is one of the cultivated pleasures of a leisurely life. Yün used to burn aloes-wood and *shuhsiang* [a kind of fragrant wood from Cambodia]. She used to steam the wood first in a cauldron thoroughly, and then place it on a copper wire net over a stove, about half an inch from the fire. Under the action of the slow fire, the wood would give out a kind of subtle fragrance without any visible smoke. Another thing, the "buddha's fingers" [a variety of citrus]

should not be smelt by a drunken man, or it would easily rot. It is also bad for the quince to perspire [as under atmospheric changes], and when it does so, one should wash it with water. The citrus alone is easy to take care of, because it is not afraid of being handled. There are different ways of taking care of "buddha's fingers" and the quince which cannot be expressed in so many words. I have seen people who take one of these things, which have been properly kept, and handle or smell it carelessly and put it down again roughly, which shows that they do not know the art of preserving these things.

In my home I always had pot flowers on my desk. "You know very well about arranging flowers in vases for all kinds of weather," said Yün to me one day. "I think you have really understood the art, but there is a way of sticking insects on to a painting which you haven't tried yet. Why don't you try?"

"I'm afraid," I replied, "that I cannot hold the insect's legs still. What can I do?"

"I know a way, except that I am afraid it would be too cruel," said Yün.

"Tell me about it," I asked.

"You know that an insect does not change its colour after death. You can find a mantis or cicada or a butterfly; kill it with a pin and use a fine wire to tie its neck to the flowers, arranging its legs so that they either hold on to the stem or rest on the leaves. It would then look like a live one. Don't you think it is very good?"

I was quite delighted and did as she suggested, and many of our friends thought it very wonderful. I am afraid it is difficult to find ladies nowadays who show such an understanding of things.

When I was staying with my friend Mr. Hua at Hsishan with Yün, Mrs. Hua used to ask Yün to teach her two daughters reading. In that country house, the yard was wide open and the glare of the summer sun was very oppressive. Yün taught them a method of making movable screens of growing flowers. Every screen consisted of a single piece. She took two little pieces of wood about four or five inches long, and laid them parallel like a low stool, with the hollow top filled by four horizontal bars over a foot long. At the four corners, she made little round holes on which she stuck a trellis-work made of bamboo. The trellis was six or seven feet high and on its bottom was placed a pot of peas which would then grow up and entwine round the bamboo trellis. This could be easily moved by two persons. One can make several of these things and place them wherever one pleases, before windows or doors, and they will look like living plants, casting their green shade into the house, warding off the sun and yet allowing the wind to come through.

They can be placed in any irregular formation, adjustable according to time and circumstances, and are, therefore, called "movable flower screens." With this method, one can use any kind of fragrant weeds of the creeper family, instead of peas. It is an excellent arrangement for people staying in the country.

My friend Lu Panfang's name was Chang and his literary name Ch'unshan. He was very good at painting pine trees, plum blossoms and chrysanthemums, as well as writing the *lishu* style of calligraphy, besides specialising in carving seals. I stayed in his home called Hsiao-shuanglou for a year and a half. The house faced east and consisted of five beams, of which I occupied three. From it one could get a beautiful view of the distance in rain or shine. In the middle of the court, there was a tree, the *osmanthus fragrans*, which filled the air with a kind of delicate fragrance. There were corridors and living rooms, and the place was quite secluded. When I went there, I brought along a man-servant and an old woman, who also brought with them a young daughter. The man-servant could make dresses and the old woman could spin; therefore Yün did embroidery, the old woman spun and the man-servant made dresses to provide for our daily expenses. I was by nature very fond of guests, and whenever we had a little drinking party, I insisted on having wine games. Yün was very clever at preparing inexpensive dishes; ordinary foodstuffs like melon, vegetables, fish and shrimps had a special flavour when prepared by her. My friends knew that I was poor, and often helped pay the expenses in order that we might get together and talk for the whole day. I was very keen on keeping the place spotlessly clean, and was besides, fond of free and easy ways with my friends.

At this time, there were a group of friends, like Yang Pufan, also called Ch'anghsü, who specialised in portrait sketches; Yüan Shaoyü, also called P'ai, who specialised in painting landscape; and Wang Hsinglan, also called Yen, good at painting flowers and birds. They all liked the Hsiao-shuanglou because of its seclusion, so they would bring their painting utensils to the place and I learnt painting from them. They would then either write "grass-script" or "*chüan*-script" or carve seals, from which we made some money which we turned over to Yün to defray expenses for teas and dinners. The whole day long, we were occupied in discussing poetry or painting only. There were, moreover, friends like the brothers Hsia Tanan and Hsia Yishan, the brothers Miao Shanyin and Miao Chihpo, Chiang Yünhsiang, Lu Chühhsiang, Chou Hsiao-hsia, Kuo Hsiao-yü, Hua Hsingfan, and Chang Hsienhan. These friends came and went as they pleased, like the swallows by the eaves. Yün would take off her hair-pin and sell it for wine without a

second's thought, for she would not let a beautiful day pass without company. To-day these friends are scattered to the four corners of the earth like clouds dispersed by a storm, and the woman I loved is dead, like broken jade and buried incense. How sad indeed to look back upon these things!

Among the friends at Hsiaoshuanglou four things were tabooed: firstly, talking about people's official promotions; secondly, gossiping about law-suits and current affairs; thirdly, discussing the conventional eight-legged essays for the imperial examinations; and, fourthly, playing cards and dice. Whoever broke any of these rules was penalized to provide five catties of wine. On the other hand, there were four things which we all approved: generosity, romantic charm, free and easy ways, and quietness. In the long summer days when we had nothing to do, we used to hold examinations among ourselves. At those parties, there would be eight persons, each bringing two hundred cash along. We began by drawing lots, and the one who got the first would be the official examiner, seated on top by himself, while the second one would be the official recorder, also seated in his place. The others would then be the candidates, each taking a slip of paper, properly stamped with a seal, from the official recorder. The examiner then gave out a line of seven words and one of five words, with which each of us was to make the best couplet. The time limit was the burning of a joss-stick and we were to tease our brains standing or walking about, but were not allowed to exchange words with each other. When a candidate had made the couplets, he placed them in a special box and then returned to his seat. After all the papers had been handed in, the official recorder then opened the box and copied them together in a book, which he submitted to the examiner, thus safeguarding against any partiality on the latter's part. Of these couplets submitted, three of the seven-word lines and three of the five-word lines were to be chosen as the best. The one who turned in the best of these six chosen couplets would then be the official examiner for the next round, and the second best would be the official recorder. One who had two couplets failing to be chosen would be fined twenty cash, one failing in one couplet fined ten cash, and failures handed in beyond the time limit would be fined twice the amount. The official examiner would get one hundred cash "incense money." Thus we could have ten examinations in a day and provide a thousand cash with which to buy wine and have a grand drinking party. Yün alone was allowed the privilege of thinking out her lines on her seat.

Once Yang Pufan made a sketch of Yün and myself working at a garden with wonderful likeness. One night, the moon was very bright and was casting a wonderfully picturesque shadow of an orchid flower

on the wall. Inspired by some hard drinking, Hsinglan said to me, "Pufan can paint your portrait sketch, but I can paint the shadows of flowers."

"Will the sketch of flowers be as good as that of a man?" I asked.

Then Hsinglan took a piece of paper and placed it against the wall, on which he traced the shadow of the orchid flower with ink. When we looked at it in the day time, there was a kind of haziness about the lines of leaves and flowers, suggestive of the moonlight, although it could not be called a real painting. Yün liked it very much and my friends wrote inscriptions on it.

There are two places in Soochow called the South Garden and the North Garden. We would go there when the rape flowers were in bloom, but there was no wine shop nearby where we could have a drink. If we brought eatables along in a basket, there was little fun drinking cold wine in the company of the flowers. Some proposed that we should look for something to drink in the neighbourhood, and others suggested that we should look at the flowers first and then come back for a drink, but this was never quite the ideal thing, which should be to drink warm wine in the presence of flowers. While no one could make any satisfactory suggestion, Yün smiled and said, "To-morrow you people provide the money and I'll carry a stove to the place myself." "Very well," they all said. When my friends had left, I asked Yün how she was going to do it. "I am not going to carry it myself," she said. "I have seen *wonton* sellers in the streets who carry along a stove and a pan and everything we need. We could just ask one of these fellows to go along with us. I'll prepare the dishes first, and when we arrive, all we need is just to heat them up, and we will have everything ready including tea and wine."

"But what about the kettle for boiling tea?"

"We could carry along an earthen pot," she said, "remove the *wonton* seller's pan and suspend the pot over the fire by a spike. This will then serve us as a kettle for boiling water, won't it?"

I clapped my hands in applause. There was a *wonton* seller by the name of Pao, whom we asked to go along with us the following afternoon, agreeing to pay him a hundred cash, to which Pao agreed. The following day my friends, who were going to see the flowers, arrived. I told them about the arrangements, and they were all amazed at Yün's ingenious idea. We started off after lunch, bringing along with us some straw mats and cushions. When we had arrived at the South Garden, we chose a place under the shade of willow trees, and sat together on the ground. First we boiled some tea, and after drinking it, we warmed up the wine and prepared the dishes. The sun was beautiful and the breeze was gentle, while the yellow rape flowers in the field



looked like a stretch of gold, with people in blue gowns and red sleeves passing by the rice fields and butterflies flitting to and fro—a sight which could make one drunk without any liquor. Very soon the wine and dishes were ready and we sat together on the ground drinking and eating. The *wonton* seller was quite a likable person and we asked him to join us. People who saw us thus enjoying ourselves thought it quite a novel idea. Then the cups, bowls and dishes lay about in great disorder on the ground, while we were already slightly drunk, some sitting and some lying down, and some singing or shouting. When the sun was going down, I wanted to eat congee, and the *wonton* seller bought some rice and cooked it for us. We then came back with a full belly.

“Did you enjoy it to-day?” asked Yün.

“We would not have enjoyed it so much had it not been for Madame!” all of us exclaimed. Then merrily we parted.

A poor scholar should try to be economical in the matter of food, clothing, house and furniture, but at the same time be clean and artistic. In order to be economical, one should “manage according to the needs of the occasion,” as the saying goes. I was very fond of having nice little suppers with a little liquor, but did not care for many dishes. Yün used to make a tray with a plum-blossom design. It consisted of six deep dishes of white porcelain, two inches in diameter, one in the centre and the other five grouped round it, painted grey and looking like a plum flower. Both its bottom and its top were bevelled and there was a handle on the top resembling the stem of a plum flower, so that, when placed on the table, it looked like a regular plum blossom dropped on the table, and on opening, the different vegetables were found to be contained in the petals of the flower. A case like this with six different dishes would be quite enough to serve a dinner for two or three close friends. If second helping was needed, more could be added. Besides this, we made another round tray with a low border for holding chop-sticks, cups and the wine pot. These were easily moved about and one could have the dinner served at any place one wished. This is an example of economy in the matter of food. Yün also made all my collars, socks and my little cap. When clothes were torn, she would cut out one piece to mend another, making it always look very neat and tidy. I used to choose quiet colours for my clothes, for the reason that dirty spots would not show easily, and one could wear them both at home and abroad. This is an instance of economy in the matter of dress. When I first took up my residence at the Hsiaoshuanglou, I found the rooms too dark, but after papering the walls with white paper, they were quite bright again. During the summer months, the ground floor was quite open, because the windows had all been taken down, and we felt that the place lacked

privacy. "There is an old bamboo screen," suggested Yün, "why don't we use it and let it serve in place of a railing?"

"But how?" I asked.

"Take a few pieces of bamboo of black colour," she replied, "and make them into a square, leaving room for people to pass out and in. Cut off half of the bamboo screen and fasten it on the horizontal bamboo, about the height of a table, letting the screen come down to the ground. Then put four vertical pieces of short bamboo in the centre, fasten these in place by means of a string, and then find some old strips of black cloth and wrap them up together with the horizontal bar with needle and thread. It would give a little privacy and would look quite well, besides being inexpensive." This is an instance of "managing according to the needs of the occasion." This goes to prove the truth of the ancient saying that "slips of bamboo and chips of wood all have their uses."

When the lotus flowers bloom in summer, they close at night and open in the morning. Yün used to put some tea leaves in a little silk bag and place it in the centre of the flower at night. We would take it out the next morning, and make tea with spring water, which would then have a very delicate flavour.

### CHAPTER III: SORROW

WHY IS IT that there are sorrows and hardships in this life? Usually they are due to one's own fault, but this was not the case with me. I was fond of friendship, proud of keeping my word, and by nature frank and straightforward, for which I eventually suffered. My father Chiafu, too, was a very generous man; he used to help people in trouble, bring up other people's sons and marry off other people's daughters in innumerable instances, spending money like dirt, all for the sake of other people. My wife and I often had to pawn things when we were in need of money, and while at first we managed to make both ends meet, gradually our purse became thinner and thinner. As the proverb says, "To run a family and mix socially, money is the first essential." At first we incurred the criticisms of the busybodies, and then even people of our own family began to make sarcastic remarks. Indeed "absence of talent in a woman is synonymous with virtue," as the ancient proverb says.

I was born the third son of my family, although the eldest; hence they used to call Yün "*sun niang*" at home, but this was later suddenly changed into "*san t'ai'ai*." This began at first in fun, but later became a general practice, and even relatives of all ranks, high and low, addressed her as

"*san t'ai'ai*." I wonder if this was a sign of the beginning of family dissension.<sup>4</sup>

When I was staying with my father at the Haining yamen in 1785, Yün used to enclose personal letters of hers along with the regular family correspondence. Seeing this, my father said that, since Yün could write letters, she should be entrusted with the duty of writing letters for my mother. It happened that there was a little family gossip and my mother suspected that it had leaked out through Yün's letters, and stopped her writing. When my father saw that it was not Yün's handwriting, he asked me, "Is your wife sick?" I then wrote to enquire from her, but got no reply. After some time had elapsed, my father was angry with her and spoke to me, "Your wife seems to think it beneath her to write letters for your mother!" Afterwards when I came home, I found out the reason and proposed to explain the matter, but Yün stopped me, saying, "I would rather be blamed by father than incur the displeasure of mother." And the matter was not cleared up at all.

In the spring of 1790, I again accompanied my father to the magistrate's office at Hankiang [Yangchow]. There was a colleague by the name of Yü Fout'ing, who was staying with his family there. One day, my father said to Fout'ing, "I have been living all my life away from home, and have found it very difficult to find someone to look after my personal comforts. If my son would sympathize with me, he should try to look for one from my home district, so that there will be no dialect difficulty." Fout'ing passed on the word to me, and I secretly wrote to Yün, asking her to look round for a girl. She did, and found one of the Yao clan. As Yün was not quite sure whether my father would take her or not, she did not tell mother about it. When the girl was leaving, she merely referred to her as a girl in the neighbourhood who was going for a pleasure trip. After learning, however, that my father had instructed me to bring the girl to his quarters for good, she listened to someone's advice and invented the story that this was the girl my father had had in mind for a long time. "But you said she was going for a pleasure trip! Now why does he marry her?" remarked my mother. And so Yün incurred my mother's displeasure, too.

I was staying at Chenchow in 1792. My father happened to be ill at Yangchow, and I went there to see him, accompanied by my younger brother Ch'it'ang. In her letter to me, Yün mentioned that Ch'it'ang had borrowed some money from a woman neighbour, for which she was the guarantor, and that now the creditor was pressing for repay-

<sup>4</sup> "*San*" means "number three." The meaning of "*niang*" and "*t'ai'ai*" varies with local usage, but generally "*niang*" refers to a young married woman in a big household, while "*t'ai'ai*" suggests the mistress of an independent home.

ment. I asked Ch'it'ang about it, and he was rather displeased, thinking that Yün was meddling with his affairs. So I merely wrote a postscript at the end of a letter with the words: "Both father and son are sick and we have no money to pay the loan. Wait till younger brother comes home, and let him take care of it himself." Soon my father got well and I left for Chenchow again. Yün's reply came when I was away and was opened by my father. The letter spoke of Ch'it'ang's loan from the neighbouring woman, and besides contained the words, "Your mother thinks that old man's illness is all due to that Yao girl. When he is improving, you should secretly suggest to Yao to say that she is homesick, and I'll ask her parents to come to Yangchow to take her home. In this way we could wash our hands of the matter." When my father saw this he was furious. He asked Ch'it'ang about the loan and Ch'it'ang declared that he knew nothing about it. So my father wrote a note to me, "Your wife borrowed a loan behind your back and spread scandals about your brother. Moreover, she called her mother-in-law 'your mother' and called her father-in-law 'old man.' This is the height of impudence. I have already sent a letter home by a special messenger, ordering her dismissal from home. If you have any conscience at all, you should realize your own fault!" I received this letter like a bolt from the blue, and immediately wrote a letter of apology to him, hired a horse and hurried home, afraid that Yün might commit suicide. I was explaining the whole matter at home, when the family servant arrived with my father's letter, which detailed her various points of misconduct in a most drastic tone. Yün wept and said, "Of course I was wrong to write like that, but father-in-law ought to forgive a woman's ignorance." After a few days, we received another letter from father: "I won't be too harsh on you. You bring Yün along and stay away from home, and do not let me see your face again."

It was proposed then that Yün might stay at her maiden home, but her mother was dead and her younger brother had run away from home, and she was not willing to go and be a dependent on her kinsfolk. Fortunately, my friend Lu Panfang heard of the matter and took pity on us, and asked us to go and stay in his home at Hsiaoshuanglou. After two years had passed, my father began to know the whole truth. It happened that shortly after I returned from Lingnan [in Kwangtung], my father personally came to the Hsiaoshuanglou and said to Yün, "Now I understand everything. Why not come home?" Accordingly we returned happily to the old home and the family was reunited. Who would suspect that the affair of Hanyüan was still brewing ahead!

Yün used to have woman's troubles, with discharges of blood. The ailment developed as a consequence of her brother K'ehch'ang running

away from home and her mother dying of grief over it which affected Yün's health very much. Since coming to know Hanyüan, however, the trouble had left her for over a year and I was congratulating myself that this friendship proved better than all medicine. Then Han was married to an influential person, who had offered a thousand dollars for her and, furthermore, undertook to support her mother. "The beauty had therefore fallen into the hands of a barbarian." I had known of this for some time, but dared not mention it to Yün. However, she went to see her one day and learnt the news for herself. On coming back, she told me amidst sobs, "I did not think that Han could be so heartless!"

"You yourself are crazy," I said. "What do you expect of a sing-song girl? Besides, one who is used to beautiful dresses and nice food like her would hardly be satisfied with the lot of a poor housewife. It were better like this than to marry her and find it to one's cost afterwards."

I tried my best to comfort her, but Yün could never quite recover from the shock of being betrayed and her troubles came again. She was confined to bed and no medicine was of any avail. The illness then became chronic and she grew greatly emaciated. After a few years, our debts piled up higher and higher, and people began to make unpleasant remarks. My father also began to dislike her more and more on account of the fact that she had been a sworn sister to a sing-song girl. I was placed in an embarrassing position between father and wife, and from that time on, I did not know what human happiness was.

Yün had given birth to a daughter, named Ch'ingchün, who was then fourteen years old. She knew how to read, and being a very understanding child, quietly went through the hardships with us, often undertaking the pawning of jewelleries and clothing. We had also a son named Fengsen, who was then twelve and was studying with a private tutor. I was out of a job for many years, and had set up a shop for selling books and paintings in my own home. The income of the shop for three days was hardly sufficient to meet one day's expenses, and I was hard pressed for money and worried all the time. I went through the severe winter without a padded gown and Ch'ingchün too was often shivering in her thin dress, but insisted on saying that she did not feel cold at all. For this reason, Yün swore that she would never see any doctor or take any medicine.

It happened once that she could get up from bed, when my friend Chou Ch'unhsü, who had just returned from the yamen of Prince Fu, wanted to pay for someone to embroider a buddhist book, the *Prajna-paramita Sutra*. Yün undertook to do it, being attracted by the handsome remuneration and besides believing that embroidering the text of a buddhist sutra might help to bring good luck and ward off calamities.

My friend, however, was in a hurry to depart and could not wait, and Yün finished it in ten days. Such work was naturally too much of a strain for a person in her condition, and she began to complain of dizziness and back-ache. How did I know that even Buddha would not show mercy to a person born under an evil star! Her illness then became very much aggravated after embroidering the buddhist sutra. She needed more attention and wanted now tea and now medicine, and the people in the family began to feel weary of her.

There was a Shansi man who had rented a house on the left of my art shop, and used to lend money at high interest for his living. He often asked me to do some painting for him, and in this way came to know me. There was a friend of mine who wanted to borrow fifty dollars from him and asked me to guarantee the loan. I could not refuse him and consented, but my friend eventually ran away with the money. The creditor, of course, came to me as the guarantor for the money, and made a lot of fuss about it. At first, I tried to pay back a part of the loan with my painting, but finally I just had nothing left to offer him in place of cash. At the end of the year, my father came home, and one day the creditor was creating a lot of noise in the house, demanding repayment of the loan. He called me to him and scolded me saying, "We belong to a scholar's family; how could we fail to repay a loan from such common people?" While I was trying to explain the matter, there appeared a messenger from Mrs. Hua, a childhood friend of Yün's, who had heard about her illness and had sent him to inquire after her health. My father thought that this messenger was from the sing-song girl Han, and became still more infuriated. "Your wife does not cultivate the feminine virtues, but has become sworn sister to a sing-song girl. You yourself do not associate with good friends, but go about with low-class people. I cannot bear to put you to death, but will allow you three days. Make up your own mind what you are going to do in the meantime, or else I will prosecute you at court for filial impiety!" When Yün heard of this, she wept and said, "It is all my fault that we have displeased our parents. I know that if I die, you will not be able to bear my death, and if we separate, you will not be able to bear the parting. Let's ask Mrs. Hua's servant to come in, and I will try to get up from bed and have a talk with him."

I then asked Ch'ingchün to assist her mother to get up and escort her outside her bedroom, where we asked the messenger from Mrs. Hua whether his mistress had sent him specially to enquire after her illness, or he was merely taking a message on his way. "My mistress has long heard of your illness," replied the servant, "and was thinking of coming personally to see you, but refrained because she thought she had never

been here before. When I was leaving, she told me to say that if Madame didn't mind living in a poor country home, she would like her to come to her place for a rest, in order to fulfil a pledge of their childhood days." The messenger was referring to a girlhood pledge between Yün and Mrs. Hua, when they were doing embroidery work together under the same lamplight, that they should assist each other in sickness or trouble.

"You go back quickly then, and tell your mistress to send a boat secretly for us within two days," she instructed the servant.

When the man had retired from the interview with her, he said to me, "You know that Mrs. Hua is as good to your wife as to her own sister and she won't at all mind your coming along too. As for the children, I am afraid that it will be inconvenient for you either to bring them along or to leave them here to trouble your parents. I should suggest that you make some arrangements for them within these two days."

There was a cousin of mine by the name of Wang Chinch'en who had a son called Yünshih, for whom he wished to secure the hand of my daughter. "I hear," said Yün, "that this son of Wang's is rather weak and useless. At best, he would be good only for carrying on, but not for building up a family fortune, but there is no fortune in the family for him to carry on. However, they are a scholar's family and he is the only son. I don't mind giving Ch'ingchün to him." So I said to Chinch'en, "We are cousins and, of course, I should be glad to give Ch'ingchün to your son, but I am afraid it is difficult under the circumstances for us to keep her until she should grow up. I propose, therefore, that you bring the matter up to my parents after we have gone to Hsishan, and take her over as your 'child daughter-in-law.' I wonder what you think of it?" Chinch'en was very pleased and agreed to my suggestion. As for my son Fengsen, I also asked a friend of mine by the name of Hsia Yishan to place him in a shop as an apprentice.

As soon as these arrangements had been made, Mrs. Hua's boat arrived. This was on the twenty-fifth of December, 1800. "If we should leave like this," said Yün, "I am afraid the neighbours will laugh at us, and besides, we haven't repaid the loan due to the Shansi man. I don't think he will let us off. We must leave quietly before dawn to-morrow."

"But can you stand the early damp of the morning in your present state of health?" I asked.

"Oh! I wouldn't worry about that," she said. "It's all a matter of fate how long one is going to live!"

I secretly informed my father about this arrangement, which he also thought best. That night, I first brought a little bag down to the boat and asked Fengsen to go to bed first. Ch'ingchün was weeping by her

mother's side, and this was Yün's parting instruction to her: "Mamma was born under an evil star and is, besides, sentimentally passionate. That is why we've come to this. However, your father is very kind to me and you have nothing to worry on my account. I am sure that, in two or three years, we shall be able to manage so that we can be reunited. When you go to your new home, you must try to be a better daughter-in-law than your mother. I know that your parents-in-law will be very kind to you because they are very proud of this match. Whatever we have left behind in the trunks and bags are yours, and you can bring them along. Your younger brother is still young, and therefore we have not let him know. At the time of parting, we are going to say that mamma is going away to see a doctor and will return in a few days. You can explain the whole thing to him when we have gone a long distance, and just let grandfather take care of him."

There was with us at this time an old woman who was the one that had let us her country house, as mentioned in the first chapter. She was going to accompany us to the country, and was now sitting in the room, silently and continually wiping her tears. In the small hours of the morning, we warmed up some congee and ate it together. Yün forced herself to smile and joke, saying, "We first met round a bowl of congee and now we are parting also round a bowl of congee. If someone were to write a play about it, it should be entitled, 'The Romance of the Congee.'" Fengsen heard these words in his sleep, woke up and asked, while yawning:

"What is mamma doing?"

"Mamma is going to see a doctor," Yün replied.

"But why so early?"

"Because the place is so far away. You stay at home with sister and be a good boy and don't annoy grandmother. I am going away with papa and shall be home within a few days."

When the cock had crowed three times, Yün buried in tears and supported by the old woman, was going out by the back door, when Fengsen suddenly wept aloud and cried: "I know mamma is not coming back!"

Ch'ingchün hushed him up, afraid that the noise might wake up other people, and patted him. All this time, I felt as if my bowels were torn to shreds and I could not say a single word except asking him to stop crying. After Ch'ingchün had closed the door on us, Yün walked along for just about a dozen paces and found she could no more, and I carried her on my back, while the old woman carried the lantern before us. We were almost arrested by a night sentinel when coming near the river, but luckily through the old woman's ruse, Yün passed



off as her sick daughter, and I her son-in-law. The boatmen, who were all servants of the Hua family, came to the rescue and helped us down to the boat. When the boat was untied and we were moving, Yün broke down completely and wept bitterly aloud. Actually, mother and son never saw each other again.

Mr. Hua, whose name was Tach'eng, was living on the Tungkao Hill at Wusih, in a house facing the hillside. He tilled the field himself and was a very simple, honest soul. Mrs. Hua, whose family name was Hsia, was, as I have mentioned, Yün's sworn sister. We arrived that day at their home about one o'clock. Mrs. Hua came with her two little daughters to the boat to meet us, and we were all very happy to see each other. She supported Yün up the river bank to her home and gave us a most cordial welcome. The neighbouring women and children all came crowding into the house to look at Yün, some enquiring for news and some expressing their sympathy with her, so that the whole house was full of their twitter.

"Now I really feel like the fisherman who went up to the Peach-Blossom Spring,"<sup>5</sup> said Yün to Mrs. Hua.

"I hope sister won't mind these people. The country folk are merely curious."

And so we lived at the place very happily and passed the New Year there. Hardly twenty days had passed since our arrival when the festival of the fifteenth day of the first moon came and Yün was already able to leave her bed. That night we watched a dragon lantern show in a big yard for threshing wheat, and I noticed that Yün was gradually becoming her normal self again. I felt very happy and secretly discussed our future plans with her.

"I don't think we ought to be staying here for ever, but, on the other hand, we have no money to go elsewhere. What shall we do?" I said.

"Your wife has thought about it, too," said Yün. "I have an idea. You know the husband of your sister, Mr. Fan Hueilai, is now serving as treasurer in the Salt Bureau of Chingkiang. Do you remember that, ten years ago, we lent him ten dollars, and it happened that we did not have sufficient money and I sold my hair-brooch to make up the amount?"

"Why, I'd forgotten all about it!" I replied.

"Why don't you go and see him? I hear Chingkiang is only a short way from here," said Yün.

I took her advice and started off on the sixteenth of the first moon, in 1801. The weather was quite mild, and one felt too warm even in a

<sup>5</sup> Reference to an idyllic retreat mentioned in an essay by T'ao Yüanming.

velvet gown and a serge *makua*. That night I stayed at an inn at Hsishan, and rented some bedding for my bed. Next morning I took a sailing boat for Kiangyin. The wind was against us and there was a slight rain. At night, we arrived at the mouth of the river by Kiangyin. I felt chilled to the bones and bought some wine to warm myself up, in that way spending the last cash I had with me. I lay there the whole night thinking what I should do, rotating in my mind the idea of perhaps pawning my inside jacket in order to get money for the ferry.<sup>6</sup>

On the nineteenth, the north wind became still severer and snow lay about the fields and I shed tears. I calculated the expenses for the room and the ferry boat and dared not buy another drink. While I was shivering both in my body and my heart, suddenly I saw an old man in sandals and a felt hat enter the shop, carrying a yellow bag on his back. He looked at me and seemed to know me.

"Aren't you Mr. Ts'ao of Taichow?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the old man. "Were it not for you, I should have died long ago in the gutter. Now my little daughter is still living and well, and she remembers you with gratitude all the time. What a pleasant surprise for us to meet here! What has brought you to this place?"

It should be explained that when I was working in the yamen of Taichow some years ago, there was a Mr. Ts'ao of a humble family who had a beautiful daughter already betrothed to someone, and an influential person had lent him money with the object of obtaining his daughter. In this way he was involved in a lawsuit. I helped him in the affair and managed to return his daughter to the family of the betrothed. Old Ts'ao came to offer his services at the yamen as a token of his gratitude and kowtowed to thank me. That was how I came to know him. I told him how I was on my way to see my brother-in-law and how I had run into the snow.

"If it clears up to-morrow," said Ts'ao, "I shall accompany you, for I am passing that way myself." And he took out some money to buy wine, showing the greatest cordiality toward me.

On the twentieth, as soon as the morning temple bell had struck, I already heard the ferry-man crying at the bank for passengers to come aboard. I got up in a hurry and asked Ts'ao to go together. "No hurry. We must eat something before going down to the boat," said Ts'ao. Then he paid the room and board for me and asked me to come out for a drink. As I had been delayed so long on my way and was anxious to start off, I was in no mood for eating, but merely chewed two pieces of sesame-seed cake. When I got to the boat, there was a piercing wind blowing over the river, and I was shivering all over.

<sup>6</sup> Kiangyin is on the south bank of the Yangtse.

"I am told there is a native of Kiangyin who hanged himself at Chingkiang, and his wife has engaged this boat to go there," said Ts'ao. "We have to wait till she comes, before we can cross the river."

So I waited there, hungry and cold, till noon before we started off. When we arrived at Chingkiang, there was already an evening haze lying over the countryside.

"There are two yamen at Chingkiang, one inside the city and the other outside. Which one is your relative working in?"

"I really don't know," I said, walking dismally behind him.

"In that case we might just as well stop here and call on him to-morrow," said Ts'ao.

When I entered the inn, my shoes and socks were already drenched through and covered with mud, and I had them dried before the fire. I was all in, hurried through my meal and dropped into a sound sleep. Next morning when I got up, my socks were half burnt by fire. Ts'ao again paid for my room and board. When I arrived at Hueilai's home in the city, he had not got up yet, but hurriedly put on his gown and came out to see me. When he saw the state I was in, he was quite astonished and said, "Why, what's the matter with brother-in-law? You look so shabby!"

"Don't ask me questions. Lend me two dollars first, if you have any with you. I want to pay back a friend who came along with me."

Hueilai gave me two Mexican dollars which I gave to Ts'ao, but Ts'ao would not take them; only after my insistence did he receive one dollar before going away. I then told Hueilai about all that had happened, as well as the purpose of my visit."

"You know we are brothers-in-law," said Hueilai, "I should help you even if I did not owe you the debt. The trouble is, our salt boats on the sea were recently captured by pirates, and we are still trying to straighten up the accounts, and I am afraid I shan't be able to help you much. Would it be all right if I tried to provide twenty dollars in repayment of the old debt?" As I was not expecting much anyway, I consented. After staying there for two days, the sky had cleared up and the weather became milder and I came home, arriving at Mrs. Hua's house on the twenty-fifth.

"Did you run into the snow on the way?" inquired Yün. I told her what had happened on the way and she remarked sadly, "When it snowed, I thought you had already arrived at Chingkiang, but you were then still on the river! It was very lucky of you to have met old Ts'ao. Really Heaven always provides for good people."

After a few days we received a letter from Ch'ingchün informing us

that her younger brother had already found a job as apprentice through the good offices of my friend Yishan. Ch'ingchün herself was also brought to Chinch'en's home on the twenty-fourth of January, with the permission of my father. Thus my children's affairs were all settled, but it was hard for parents and children to part like this.

The weather was clear and mild in the beginning of February. With the money I had obtained from my brother-in-law, I made arrangements for a trip to Yangchow, where my old friend Hu K'engt'ang was working the Salt Bureau. I obtained a post there as secretary at the imperial tax bureau and felt more settled. In the eighth moon of the following year, 1802, I received a letter from Yün which said: "I have completely recovered now. I don't think it is right for us to be staying at a friend's place for ever, and wish very much to come to Yangchow, and see the famous P'ingshan." I then rented a two-roomed house on a river outside the First-in-Spring Gate of Yangchow city, and went personally to bring Yün to our new home. Mrs. Hau presented us with a little boy servant, called Ah Shuang, who was to help us in cooking and general housework. She also made an agreement with us that some day we should live together as neighbours. As it was already in the tenth moon and it was too cold at P'ingshan, I asked her to come next spring for a visit.

I was fully hoping, then, that we were going to have a quiet life and Yün's health would steadily recover and that eventually we might be reunited with our family. In less than a month, however, the yamen was reducing its staff and cut off fifteen persons. As I was only indirectly recommended by a friend, naturally I was among those sent away. Yün at first thought of different plans for me; she tried to be cheerful and comforted me, and never said a word of complaint. Thus we dragged on till the second moon of 1803, when she had a severe relapse, with profuse discharges of blood. I wanted to go again to Chingkiang for help, but Yün said:

"It is better to go to a friend than to a relative for help."

"You are quite right," I said, "but all my friends are themselves in trouble and won't be able to help us, however kind they are."

"All right, then," she said. "The weather is quite mild now and I don't think there will be any snow. Go quickly and come back quickly, but don't worry on my account. Take good care of yourself and increase not the burden of my sins."

At this time, we were already unable to meet our daily expenses, but in order to ease her mind, I pretended to her that I was going to hire a donkey. As a matter of fact, I took the journey on foot, merely eating some wheat cakes in my pocket whenever I felt hungry. I went in a

south-easterly direction and crossed two creeks. After going for eighty or ninety *li*, I found a deserted country without any houses around. As night came, I saw only a stretch of yellow sands under the starry sky. There I found a little shrine of the God of Earth, about five feet high, enclosed by a low wall, with two little cypress trees in front. Then I kowtowed to the God and prayed: "I am Mr. Shen of Soochow on my way to a relative's. I've lost my bearings and intend to borrow thy temple to pass a night here. Protect me, I pray!" I then put away the little stone incense tripod and tried to crawl in. The shrine, however, was too small for my body by half and I managed to sit on the ground, leaving my legs outside. I turned my travelling cap round, using the back to cover my face, and thus sat there listening with my eyes closed, but all I could hear was the whistling of winds blowing by. My feet were sore and my spirit was tired and soon I dozed off.

When I woke up, it was already broad daylight, and suddenly I heard people's footsteps and sounds of talking outside the low enclosure. Immediately I peeped out and saw that it was the peasants, who were going to a fair, passing by. I asked them for directions and they told me that I was to go straight south for ten *li* until I should reach Taihsing City, and after going through the city, to go south-east for ten *li* until I should come across an earthen mound; after passing eight such mounds, I would then arrive at Chingkiang. All I had to do was to follow the main road. I turned back then, put the incense tripod back in its original place, thanked the God for the night's rest and started off. After passing Taihsing, I took a wheelbarrow and arrived at Chingkiang about four o'clock in the afternoon.

I sent in my card and waited for a long time before the watchman came out and said, "Mr. Fan is away on official business to Ch'angchow." From the way he talked, I thought this was merely a pretext for not seeing me. I asked him when his master was coming home.

"I don't know," replied the servant.

"Then I am going to stay here until he returns, even if I have to wait a year."

The watchman guessed the purpose of my visit and secretly asked me, "Is Mrs. Fan really your own sister by the same mother?"

"If she weren't my own sister, I wouldn't have decided to wait until Mr. Fan's return."

The watchman then asked me to stay. After three days, I was told that Mr. Fan had returned and was given twenty-five dollars, with which I hurriedly hired a donkey and returned home.

I found Yün very sad and sobbing at home. When she saw me, she said rather abruptly, "Do you know that Ah Shuang ran away yesterday

with our things? I have asked people to go about looking for him, but so far with no results. I don't mind losing the things, but the boy was given to me by his own mother, who told me repeatedly on parting to take good care of him. If he is running home, he will have to cross the Yangtse River, and I don't know what may happen to him. Or if his parents should hide him away and ask me for their son, what are we to do? And how am I going to face my sworn sister?"

"Please calm yourself," I said. "I think there is no ground for such anxiety. One who hides away his own son must do it for blackmail, but they know perfectly well that we haven't got any money. Besides, since the boy's coming here half a year ago, we have given him food and clothing, and have never struck him or been harsh to him, as everybody round here knows. I think the real fact is that the boy was a rascal and, seeing that we were in a bad way, stole our things and ran away. As for Mrs. Hua, it is she, rather than you, that should feel uneasy—for sending you such a scamp. The thing to do is for us to report the matter immediately to the magistrate and prevent any further complications."

Yün felt a little easier after hearing my view of the situation, but from then on she often cried out in her sleep, "Ah Shuang has run away!" or, "How could Han be so heartless!" and her illness became worse and worse every day. I wanted to send for a doctor, but Yün stopped me, saying:

"You know my illness started in consequence of deep grief over my mother's death following upon K'ehch'ang's running away, then it was aggravated through my passion for Han and finally made worse by my chagrin at this recent affair. Besides, I was often too cautious and afraid of making mistakes. I have tried my best to be a good daughter-in-law, and have failed, and have consequently developed dizziness and palpitation of the heart. The illness is now deep in my system and no doctor will be of any avail, and you may just as well spare yourself the expense. As I look back upon the twenty-three years of our married life, I know that you have loved me and been most considerate to me, in spite of all my faults. I am happy to die with a husband and understanding friend like you, and I have no regrets. Yes, I have been as happy as a fairy at times, with my warm cotton clothing and frugal but full meals and the happy home we had. Do you remember how we used to enjoy ourselves amongst springs and rocks, as at the Ts'anglang Pavilion and the Hsiao shuanglou? But who are we to enjoy the good luck of a fairy, for which only those are worthy who have lived a virtuous life from incarnation to incarnation? We had, therefore, offended God by trying to snatch a happiness that was above our lot; hence our various earthly troubles. It all comes of your too great love, bestowed upon one who is ill-fated and unworthy of this happiness."

After a while she spoke again and amidst sobs: "Everyone has to die once. My only regret is, we have to part halfway from each other for ever, and I am not able to be your wife until the end of your days and see with my own eyes the wedding of Fengsen." After saying this, tears rolled down her eyes as big as peas. I tried to comfort her by saying, "You have been ill for eight years, and this is not the first time that you are in a critical condition. Why do you suddenly say such heart-breaking words?"

"I have been dreaming lately," she said, "of my parents who have sent a boat to welcome me home. Whenever I close my eyes, I feel my body is so light, so light, like one walking among the clouds. It seems that my spirit has already departed and only my body remains."

"This is the effect of your extreme weakness," I said. "If you will take some tonic and rest yourself properly, I am sure you will get well."

Then Yün sighed again and said, "If there were the slightest ray of hope, I would not have told you all these things. But now death is approaching and it is high time I spoke my mind. I know you have displeased your parents all on my account; therefore when I die, your parents' attitude will change round, and you yourself will feel more at ease toward your parents. You know they are already very old, and when I die, you should return to them as soon as possible. If you cannot bring my remains back to the native district for burial, you can temporarily keep my coffin here and then see to its removal afterwards. I hope you will find another one who is both beautiful and good to take my place and serve our parents and bring up my children, and then I shall die content." At this point, I broke down completely and fell to weeping as if my bowels had been cut through.

"Even if you should leave me halfway like this," I said, "I shall never marry again. Besides, 'it is difficult to be water for one who has seen the great seas, and difficult to be clouds for one who has seen the Yangtse Gorges.'" Then Yün held my hand and was going to say something again, but she could only mumble the words "Next incarnation!" half audibly again and again. Suddenly she began to feel short of breath, her chin was set, her eyes stared wide open, and however I called her name, she could not utter a single word. Two lines of tears began to roll down her face. After a while, her breath became weaker, her tears gradually dried up and her spirit departed from this life for ever. This was on the thirtieth of the third moon, 1803. A solitary lamp was shining then in the room, and a sense of utter forlornness overcame me. In my heart opened a wound that shall be healed nevermore!

My friend Hu K'engt'ang kindly helped me with ten dollars, and

together with this and what I could obtain by selling what I had in the house, I saw to her proper burial.

Alas! Yün was a woman with the heart and talent of a man. From the time she was married into my home, I had been forced to run about abroad for a living, while she was left without sufficient money, and she never said a word of complaint. When I could stay at home, our sole occupation was the discussion of books and literature. She died in poverty and sickness without being able to see her own children, and who was to blame but myself? How could I ever express the debt I owe to a good chamber companion? I should like to urge upon all married couples in the world neither to hate nor to be too passionately attached to each other. As the proverb says, "A loving couple can never reach grand old age together." Mine is a case in point.

According to custom, the spirit of the deceased is supposed to return to the house on a certain day after his death, and people used to arrange the room exactly as the deceased had left it, putting his old clothes on the bed and his old shoes by the bedside for the returning spirit to take a farewell look. We called this in Soochow "closing the spirit's eyes." People also used to invite Taoist monks to recite incantations, calling to the spirit to visit the deathbed and then sending it away. This was called "welcoming the spirit." At Yangchow the custom was to prepare wine and dishes and leave them in the dead man's chamber, while the whole family would run away, in order to "avoid the spirit." It often happened that things were stolen while the house was thus deserted. On this day, my landlord, who was staying with me, left the house, and my neighbours urged me to leave the offerings at home and get away also. To this I gave a cold, indifferent reply, for I was hoping to see the spirit of Yün again. There was a certain Chang Yümen of the same district who warned me saying, "One may be very well possessed by the evil spirit, when one's mind dwells on the uncanny. I should not advise you to try it, for I rather believe in the existence of ghosts."

"This is the very reason I am going to stay—because I believe that ghosts do exist," I replied.

"To encounter the spirit of the deceased on its return home has an evil influence on living men," Chang replied. "Even if your wife's spirit should return, she is living in a world different from ours. I am afraid you won't be able to see her form, but will, on the other hand, be affected by her evil influence."

I was so madly in love with her that I did not care. "I don't care a bit about it," I said to him. "If you are so concerned about me, why not stay on and keep me company?"



"I'll stay outside the door. If you should see anything strange, just call for me."

I then went in with a lamp in my hand and saw the room was exactly as she had left it, only my beloved was not there, and tears welled up in my eyes in spite of myself. I was afraid then that with my wet eyes, I should not be able to see her form clearly, and I held back my tears and sat on the bed, waiting for her appearance with wide open eyes. Softly I touched her old dress and smelt the odour of her body which still remained, and was so affected by it that I fainted off. Then I thought to myself, how could I let myself doze off since I was waiting for the return of her spirit? I opened my eyes and looked round and saw the two candle-lights burning low on the table as small as little peas. It gave me a goose-flesh and I shuddered all over. Then I rubbed my hands and my forehead and looked carefully and saw the pair of candle-lights leap higher and higher till they were over a foot long and the papered wooden frame of the ceiling was going to catch fire. The sudden glow of the lights illuminated the whole room and enabled me to look round clearly, when suddenly they grew small and dark as before. At this time I was in a state of excitement and wanted to call in my companion, when I thought that her gentle female spirit might be scared away by the presence of another living man. Secretly and in a quiet tone, I called her name and prayed to her, but the whole room was buried in silence and I could not see a thing. Then the candle-lights grew bright again, but did not shoot high up as before. I went out and told Yümen about it, and he thought me very brave, but did not know that I was merely in love.

After Yün's death, I thought of the poet Lin Hocking who "took the plum-trees for his wives and a stork for his son," and I called myself "Meiyi," meaning "one bereaved of the plum-tree." I provisionally buried Yün on the Golden Cassia Hill outside the West Gate of Yangchow, at the place which was commonly known as "The Precious Pagoda of the Ho Family." I bought a lot and buried her there, according to her dying wish, bringing home with me the wooden tablet for worship. My mother was also deeply touched by the news of her death. Ch'ingchün and Fengsen came home, wept bitterly and went into mourning.

"You know father is still angry with you," said my brother Ch'it'ang. "You'd better stay away at Yangchow for some time and wait till father returns home, when I shall speak for you and then write for you to come home."

I then kowtowed to my mother and parted from my daughter and son and wept aloud for a while, before I departed again for Yangchow,

where I painted for my living. Thus I was often enabled to loiter round and weep over Yün's grave, forlorn soul that I was! And whenever I passed our old house, the sight was too much for me to bear. On the festival of the ninth day of the ninth moon, while all the other graves were yellow, hers was still green. The graveyard keeper said to me, "This is a propitious place for burial, that is why the spirit of the earth is so strong." And I secretly prayed to her, "O Yün! The autumn wind is blowing high, and my gowns are still thin. If you have any influence, protect me and arrange that I may have a job to pass the old year, while waiting abroad for news from home."

Soon afterwards one Mr. Chang Yü-an, who had a post as secretary at the Kiangtu yamen, was going to bury his parents at home in Chekiang, and asked me to take his place for three months. And thus I was provided against the winter. After I left that place, Chang Yümen asked me to stay at his home. He was out of a job, too, and told me that he was finding it hard to meet the expenses at the end of the year. I gave him all the twenty dollars I had in my pocket, and told him that this was the money I had reserved for bringing Yün's coffin home and that he could pay me back when I heard word from my family.

So that year I passed the New Year at Chang's home. I was waiting for mail from home morning and night, but no news came at all. In March of 1804, I received a letter from my daughter Ch'ingchün, informing me of my father's illness. I wanted very much to go home to Soochow, but was afraid of father's anger. While I was still hesitating, I received a second letter from her, telling me that father had died. Sorrow went into my heart and pierced my bones and I cried to heaven in vain, for I knew it was too late. Brushing aside all considerations, I dashed home under the starry sky. I knocked my head against the coffin until I bled and wailed bitterly. Alas! my father had a hard time all his life working away from home, and he begot such an unfilial son as I, who was neither able to minister to his pleasure while he was alive, nor able to serve him at his deathbed. Great, indeed, is my sin!

"Why didn't you come home earlier then?" said my mother, seeing me weeping so bitterly.

"Had it not been for Ch'ingchün's letter," I said, "I would not even have heard of it at all." My mother cast a look at my brother's wife and kept silent.

I then kept watch over the coffin in the hall, but for seven days and seven nights not one in the whole family spoke to me about family affairs or discussed the funeral arrangements with me. I was ashamed of myself for not fulfilling a son's duties and would not ask them questions, either.

One day some men suddenly appeared at our house to ask for repayment of a loan, and made a lot of noise in the hall. I came out and said to them, "I don't blame you for pressing for repayment of the debt. But isn't it rather mean of you to create such a turmoil, while my father's remains are scarcely cold yet?" One among them then secretly explained to me, "Please understand we have been sent here by somebody. You just get away for a moment, and we will ask for repayment directly from the man who called us here."

"I'll return myself what I owe! You had better all get away!"

My wish was immediately obeyed, and the people having left, I called Ch'it'ang to my presence and remonstrated with him, "Although elder brother is stupid, I have never committed any great wrongs. If you are thinking of my being made heir to uncle, remember that I did not receive a single cent of the family fortune. Do you suppose I came home to divide property with you instead of for the funeral? A man ought to stand on his own feet; I have come empty-handed, and empty-handed I will go!" After saying this, I left him and went behind the curtain again and cried bitterly before the coffin.

I then said good-bye to my mother and went to tell Ch'ingchün that I was going to a mountain to become a Taoist monk. While Ch'ingchün was just trying to persuade me not to do so, some friends of mine arrived. They were the brothers Hsia Nanhsün, literary name Tan-an, and Hsia Fengt'ai, literary name Yishan. They remonstrated with me in a very severe tone, and thus began:

"We don't blame you for being angry with this kind of a family, but although your father is dead, your mother is still living, and although your wife has died, your son is not independent yet. Have you really the heart to become a monk?"

"What am I going to do then?" I replied.

"For the time being," said Tan-an, "you could put up at our home. I hear that his honour Shih Chot'ang is coming home on leave from his office. Why don't you wait till he comes and see him about it? I am sure he will be able to give you a position."

"This is hardly proper," I said. "I am still in the hundred days of my mourning, and your parents are still living."

"Don't worry on that account," said Yishan, "for our father, too, joins us in the invitation. If you think it's not quite proper to do so, then there is a temple on the west of our home where the abbot is a good friend of mine. How about putting up there?" To this I agreed.

Then Ch'ingchün said to me, "Grandfather has left us a family property certainly not less than three or four thousand dollars. If you will not have a share of the property, will you not even take along your

travelling bag? I'll fetch it myself and bring it to the temple for you." In this way not only did I get my travelling bag, but also found ingeniously stuck in it some books, paintings, ink slabs and pots for holding writing brushes. The monk put me up at the Tower of Great Mercy. The tower faced south and on its east was a buddha. I occupied the western room which had a moon window exactly opposite the buddha, this being the room where pilgrims used to have their meals. At the door, there was a most imposing standing figure, representing the God of War holding a huge knife in his hand. A big maidenhair tree stood in the yard, three fathoms in circumference, and cast a heavy shade over the whole tower. At night the wind would blow past the tree, making a roaring noise. Yishan often brought some wine and fruit to the place to have a drink between ourselves.

"Are you not afraid of staying here alone on a dark night?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "I have lived a straight life and have a free conscience, why should I be afraid?"

It happened that shortly after I moved in, there was a pouring rain which continued day and night for over a month. I was always afraid that some branch of the maidenhair tree might break off and crash on to the roof, but, thanks to the protection of the gods, nothing happened. In the country around us, however, a great number of houses had fallen down and all the rice fields were flooded. I spent the days painting with the monk as if nothing had happened.

In the beginning of July, the sky cleared up and I went to the Ts'ung-ming Island as a personal secretary of Yishan's father, whose name was Shunhsiang and who was going there on business. For this I received twenty dollars as remuneration. When I returned, they were making my father's grave and Ch'it'ang asked Fengsen to tell me that he was in need of money for the burial expenses and would I lend him ten or twenty dollars? I was going to turn over the money I had to him, but Yishan would not allow it and insisted on contributing half of the amount. I then went ahead to my father's grave, accompanied by Ch'ingchün.

After the burial, I returned to the Tower of Great Mercy. At the end of September, Yishan had some rent to collect from his crops at Yungt'ai Beach in Tunghai and I accompanied him there, where I stayed for two months. When I returned, it was already late winter and I moved to his home at the Snow-and-Wild-Goose Hut to pass the New Year. He was better to me than my own kin.

In July, 1805, Chot'ang returned home from the capital. This was his "fancy name," while his real name was Yünyü and his literary name Chihju. He was a childhood chum of mine, took the first place in the

imperial examinations in 1790 during the reign of Ch'ienlung, and then became magistrate of Chungking in Szechuen. During the rebellion of the White Lily Secret Society, he won great merit for himself fighting the rebels for three years. When he returned, we were very glad to see each other. On the ninth day of the ninth moon, he was going again to his office at Chungking with his family and asked me to accompany him. I then said good-bye to my mother at the home of Lu Shangwu, the husband of my ninth sister, for by this time my father's home had already been sold. My mother gave me parting instructions as follows: "You should try your best to glorify the name of the family, for your younger brother will never amount to anything. Remember I depend entirely on you." Fengsen was seeing me off, but on the way he suddenly began to cry pitifully, and I bade him go home.

When our boat arrived at King'ou [Chinkiang], Chot'ang said he wanted to see an old friend of his, Wang T'ifu, who was a *chüjen* and was working at the Salt Bureau in Yangchow. He was going out of his way to call on him and I accompanied him there, and thus had another chance to look at Yün's grave. Then we turned back and went up the Yangtse River and enjoyed all the scenery on the way. When we arrived at Kingchow we learned that my friend had been promoted a *taotai* at Tungkuan [in Honan]. He, therefore, asked me to stay at Kingchow with his son Tunfu and family, while he went to pass the New Year at Chungking with just a small entourage and went directly to his new office via Chengtu. In February of the following year, his family at Szechuen then followed him there by boat up the river as far as Fanch'eng. From that point on, we had to travel by land. The way was very long and the expenses were heavy; with the heavy load of men and luggage, horses died and cartwheels were often broken on the road and it was altogether a tortuous journey. It was March when we arrived at Tungkuan, when Chot'ang was again transferred to Shantung as inspector. As he was out of money and his family could not follow him there, we remained temporarily at the T'ungh'uan College. Only at the end of October did he receive his salary from his Shantung office, which enabled him to send for his family. In his letter he enclosed a note from Ch'ingchün, which informed me that Fengsen had died in April. Then I began to understand that the tears he shed when sending me off from home were tears of farewell. Alas! Yün had only one son and must even he be taken away and not allowed to continue her line! Chot'ang was also greatly touched at the news, and presented me with a concubine. From that time on, I was again thrown into life's mad turmoil, a floating dream from which I do not know when I shall wake up!

## CHAPTER IV: THE JOYS OF TRAVEL

FOR THIRTY YEARS I WORKED as a government clerk in different yamens and practically visited every province except Szechuen, Kweichow and Yunnan. Unfortunately, I was not free to wander where I liked, inasmuch as I was always attached to some office, and could therefore only hastily enjoy such natural scenery as came my way, getting at most a general impression of things without the opportunity to explore the more unfrequented and out-of-the-way spots. I am by nature fond of forming my own opinions without regard to what others say. For instance, in the criticism of painting and poetry, I would value highly certain things that others look down upon, and think nothing of what others prize very highly. So it is also with natural scenery, whose true appreciation must come from one's own heart or not at all. There are famous scenic spots that do not at all appeal to me, and, on the other hand, certain places that are not at all famous but delighted me intensely. I will merely record here the places that I have visited.

When I was fifteen, my father Chiafu was working at the yamen at Shanyin with one official Chao, who employed a certain old scholar of Hangchow by the name of Chao Ch'üan, literary name Shengtsai, as private tutor for his son, and I was made by my father to study under him. Once I had the opportunity of visiting Hushan Hill, which was over ten *li* from the city and could be reached only by a waterway. On approaching the hill, I saw there was a stone cave with a rock jutting out horizontally as if it was going to fall down. My boat passed under this and went inside the cave, commonly known as "Shuiyüan" (Water Park), which was very spacious within and surrounded on all sides by perpendicular rocks. There was a stone open tower overlooking the water, consisting of five beams, and a stone inscription on the opposite rock bearing the words, "Looking at Jumping Fish." The water was very deep at this spot and people said that there were some gigantic fish in it. I threw some crumbs down, but saw only small ones hardly a foot long come up to nibble them. A road led from the back of the open tower to "Hanyüan" (Land Park), where there was a jumble of rockery, standing in irregular profusion, some of them only as broad as the palm of a hand, and others being stone pillars with their tops ground even, and capped with huge rocks. The whole thing was artificial, the workman's marks being too apparent, and nothing good could be said for them. After going round the place, I had a picnic in the Water Park at the open tower by the waterside. I asked an attendant to fire some crackers, which made a noise like thunder, reverberating throughout the whole valley. This was my first taste of the joys of travel in my

young days. Unfortunately I, was not able to visit Lant'ing<sup>7</sup> and Emperor Yün's Tomb, a sin of omission which I very much regret to this day.

In the eighth moon of 1781, my father returned home, laid up with a cold. He would ask for fire when in a cold fit, and ask for ice when in high fever, despite my repeated advice to the contrary, and in this way, it turned into typhoid, which grew from bad to worse every day. I attended on him day and night and never slept a wink for almost a month. My wife, Yün-niang, also fell seriously ill at this time and was confined to bed; everything was in a muddle and I felt very miserable. "I am afraid I shall never get well," said my father to me one day, calling me to his bedside for final instructions. "I don't think you can make a living with the knowledge derived from a few books, and I am going to place you in charge of a sworn brother of mine, Chiang Ssutsai, who will bring you up to follow my profession." Ssutsai turned up next day and I kowtowed to him as pupil to tutor by my father's bedside. Soon afterwards, however, my father was attended to by a famous doctor, Mr. Hsü Kuanlien, and gradually got well; Yün, too, was cured by the same doctor and was able to leave her bed. Thus I began my training as a yamen clerk. I mention this unpleasant episode here in my record of the joys of travel, because through this change of profession, I was enabled to leave my studies and travel a great deal.

My teacher's name was Hsiang. I followed him in the winter of that year to the yamen of Fenghsien. There was a colleague of mine, also learning the same profession at the place; his name was Ku Chinchien, literary name Hungkan and "fancy name" Purple Haze. Ku was also a native of Soochow and was by nature a big-hearted, frank and straight-forward fellow. As he was a year older, I called him 'elder brother,' and he called me 'younger brother,' and we became fast friends. Hungkan was in fact the best friend I had in this world. Unfortunately he died at twenty-two, and now in my forty-sixth year I doubt if I could find another friend like him in this wide, wide world. I remember that when we began our friendship, our minds were full of noble thoughts and we often thought of living a quiet life in the mountains.

In the spring of 1783, I accompanied my teacher to Yangchow and in this way I got a glimpse of the Chinshan and Chiaoshan Hills [at Chinkiang]. The former should be looked at from a distance, and the latter at close range; unfortunately I failed to visit these hills, although I passed them many times. On crossing the Yangtse River to the north,

<sup>7</sup> Made famous by Wang Hsichih's essay.

I saw before my very eyes the "walls of green willows" of Yangchow, as the poet Wang Yüyang described it. The P'ingshan Hall was about two or three *li* from the city, but was reached by a winding route of eight or nine *li*. Although this entire landscape was built by human labour it was so ingeniously planned that it looked like a bit of nature, suggesting to me the "marble halls" and "emerald pools" and phantom gardens of Fairyland itself. The beauty of the place consisted in the fact that over a dozen private villas and home gardens combined to form a huge park, stretching all the way from the city to the hill, with a unity all its own. From the point of view of landscape designing, the most difficult part to lay out satisfactorily was a space of over a *li* that lay close by the city wall. A city should, in order to be picturesque, be built against a background of a vast countryside with ranges of hills in the distance; it was, therefore, a most difficult problem to have pavilions and parks around it without achieving a stupid, closed-in effect. But the whole thing was so contrived, with a pavilion here and a terrace there, and glimpses of walls and rocks and trees and bamboo groves so cleverly designed that there was not the slightest bit of obtrusiveness to the tourist's eye. Only a master architect of the mind could have conceived and executed this.

The stretch began with the Rainbow Garden immediately adjoining the city wall, and after a turn to the north, came the Rainbow Bridge: I do not know whether the garden took its name from the bridge or the bridge from the garden. Rowing past these places, one came to the scene called "Spring Willows on a Long Embankment." It was a striking proof of the ingenuity of the designer, that this scene was placed at this spot and not immediately close to the city wall. With another turn to the west, there was an artificial mound with a temple on it, called "The Little Chinshan."<sup>8</sup> This was also a master stroke, for with this hill blocking the view, the picture became tightened and wonderfully compact. I was told that owing to the fact that the soil here consisted mainly of sand, they had tried several times to build the mound without success, until wooden piles had to be sunk into the ground at successive heights and then earth piled on to them, the whole work thus costing several tens of thousands of dollars. No one except the rich merchants [of Yangchow] could have carried through a project like this.

After this we came to the Tower of Triumphal Delight, where the waterway became broader and people used to hold annual boat races on the Dragon Boat Festival. This was spanned over by the Lotus Bridge running north and south. The Bridge was situated on a central point, and on its top were five pavilions, with four at the corners and one at

<sup>8</sup> Or Little Gold Hill, after the Chinshan of Chinkiang.



the centre, called by the natives of Yangchow "Four Dishes and One Soup." I did not like it because the design was too laborious or suggested too much mental effort. On the south of the Bridge there was the Lotus-Seed Temple, with a Thibetan dagoba rising straight up from its midst and its golden dome rising into the clouds; with the terra-cotta walls and temple roofs nestling under the kind shade of pine-trees and cypresses and the sounds of temple bells and *ch'ing* [musical stone] coming to the traveller's ears intermittently—all combining to achieve a unique effect that could not be duplicated in any other pleasure garden of the world.

After passing by the bridge I saw a high three-storeyed tower with projecting eaves and painted girders in rainbow hues, decorated with rocks from the Taihu Lake and surrounded by white marble balustrades. This place was called "Where the Five Clouds Are Abundant," its position in this picture suggesting the main turning-point of a literary composition. After this we came to a place known as "Morning Sun on the Szechuen Hill"—rather commonplace and uninteresting to me, besides being artificial. As we were approaching the hill the waterway narrowed down and lost itself in four or five bends formed by blocking the water's path with earth piled on the banks and planting them with bamboos.

It was then as if the spirit of the place had spent itself when, all of a sudden, a beautiful view opened up before my eyes with the "Forest of Ten Thousand Pines" of the P'ingshan Hall before me. The three characters "P'ingshan-t'ang" were written by Ouyang Hsiu himself.<sup>9</sup> The genuine spring, called the "Fifth Best Spring East of Huai River," was situated in a grotto, being nothing but a well whose water tasted like that of natural mountain springs, this being usually confused with the other well at the Lotus Pavilion with an iron cover on top bearing six holes, whose water was flat and tasteless. The Garden of Nine Peaks was situated in another secluded spot outside the South Gate; it had a natural charm of its own and in my opinion should be regarded as the best of all the gardens round the place. I did not go to K'angshan and have no idea what it is like.

The above is merely a rough sketch of the place, with no attempt to go into its artistic beauties and details of workmanship. In general, I would say, the place looked more like a beautiful woman in a gorgeous costume than a pretty country maid washing on a river bank. It happened that I visited the place shortly after it had been done up expressly for the visit of the Emperor Ch'ienlung, and thus saw it at its best—an opportunity which rarely comes to a person in a life-time.

<sup>9</sup> This was where the Sung scholar stayed and has now been made a temple to his honour.

In the spring of 1784, I accompanied my father to the yamen of Wukiang under the magistrate Mr. Ho, where I had colleagues like Chang Pinchiang of Shanyin, Chang Yingmu of Wulin, [Hangshow] and Ku Aich'uan of T'iaoch'i. There we had the privilege of preparing a provisional palace for the Emperor at Nantouyü, and thus had the honour of seeing His Majesty a second time. One day [during this occasion], I suddenly thought of returning home when it was already approaching sundown. I got a small "fast boat," which was the kind used for fast official errands with two oars at the sides and two *yaolu* at the stern. This kind was called in Kiangsu "Horse's Head on the Surf," because it went so fast on the Taihu water. Quick as riding upon a stork in the air, I reached the Wumen Bridge in a second, and reached home before supper was ready.

The people of my district were usually given to luxuries, and on this day they were still more extravagant. I saw dazzling lanterns and heard music of the flute and song all over the place, suggesting to me the "painted beams and carved girders," "beaded curtains and embroidered screens," "jade railings," and "screens of [women in] embroidered shoes" mentioned in ancient literature. It was dragged about by my friends to help them in arranging flowers and hanging silk sashes. In our spare time, we would get together and indulge ourselves in wine and song or go about the place. Like all young people, we went through all this din and commotion without feeling tired. I would not have seen all this, if I had been living in an out-of-the-way village, even though it was a time of national peace and order.

That year Ho, the magistrate, was dismissed for some reason or other, and my father went to work with another magistrate Wang at Haining [in Chckiang]. There was a Mr. Liu Hucichieh at Kashing, a devoted buddhist, who came to call on my father. His home was situated by the side of the Tower of Mist and Rain [at Kashing], and had an open tower called Moon-in-the-Water Lodge overlooking the river. This was where he used to recite buddhist books and was arranged spick and span like a monk's studio. The Tower of Mist and Rain was in the middle of the Mirror Lake, and had an open terrace looking out on green willows on the banks all around; had there been more bamboos, the view would have been perfect. Fishing boats lay about on the stretch of calm water—a scene which seemed to be best looked at under the moonlight. The monks there could prepare very excellent vegetarian food.

At Haining I was working with Shih Hsinyüeh of Nanking and Yü Wuch'iao of Shanyin as my colleagues. Hsinyüeh had a son called Choheng, who was gentle and quiet of disposition, being the second best friend I had in life. Unfortunately, we met only for a short time

and then parted like duckweed on the water. I also visited the "Garden of Peaceful Eddies" of Mr. Ch'en, which occupied over a hundred *mu* and had any number of towers, buildings, terraces and winding corridors. There was a wide pond with a zigzag bridge of six bends across it; the rocks were covered with ivy and creepers which helped to make them look so much more natural; a thousand old trees reared their heads to the sky, and in the midst of singing birds and falling flowers, I felt like transported into a deep mountain forest. Of all the gardens I had seen built with artificial rockeries and pavilions on a flat ground, this was the one which approached nature most. One day we had a dinner at the Cassia Tower and the flavours of the food were simply lost in the fragrance of the flowers around—with the exception of pickled ginger, which remained sharp and pungent. The ginger is by its nature the more biting the older it becomes, and it seems to me extremely appropriate therefore for it to be compared to old dour, veteran ministers of state, who often have more guts than the young ones.

Going out of the South Gate, one came upon the great sea, its white-crested bores rushing by twice daily with the ebb and tide like miles-long silvery embankments. There were surf-riding boats lying in wait with the bow facing the oncoming bore. At the bow of the boat was placed a wooden board shaped like a big knife for cutting the water when the bore came. With a movement of the cutter, the tide was divided and the boat took a dive into the water. After a while it came up again, and turning round, it followed the surf up the bay for miles with a tremendous speed.

On the embankment, there was a pagoda in an enclosure where I once viewed the bore on a mid-autumn night with my father. About thirty *li* eastwards further down the embankment, there was the Needle Hill, which rose up abruptly and ended up in the sea. A tower on its top bore the signboard: "The Sea is Wide and the Sky Empty," from which place one could gain an unlimited view of the universe, with nothing except angry sea waves rising to meet the sky.

I received an invitation to go to Chich'i in Huichow [in Anhui] from the magistrate Mr. K'eh there, when I was twenty-five years of age. I took a river junk from Hangchow, sailed up the Fuch'un River and visited the Fishing Terrace of Yen Tzulung. This so-called "Fishing Terrace" was located halfway up the hill in the form of an overhanging cliff over a hundred feet above the water level. Could it be that it was on the same level with the river in the Han Dynasty? On a moon-lit night, our boat anchored at Chiehk'ou, where there was an inspector's office. The moon seemed so small on the top of the high mountain and

rocks stood up above the surface of the water, making a most enchanting picture. I also got a glimpse of the foot of Huangshan, or the Yellow Mountains, but unfortunately could not go up and explore the whole place.

The town of Chich'i is a very small one, being situated in a mountainous region and inhabited by a people of very simple ways. . . . There was a village called the Benevolence Village, thirty *li* from the city, where they had a festival of flowers and fruit-trees every twelve years, during which a flower show was held. I was lucky enough to be there at the time and gladly undertook the journey to the place. There being no sedan-chairs or horses for hire, I taught the people to make some bamboos into carrying poles, and tie a chair on them, which served as a makeshift. There was only another colleague going along with me, one Hsü Ch'eh't'ing, and all the people who saw us carried on the conveyance were greatly amused. When we reached the place, we saw there was a temple, but did not know what god they worshipped. There was a wide open space in front of the temple where they had erected a provisional theatrical stage, with painted beams and square pillars, which looked very imposing at a distance, but at close range were found to consist of painted paper wrapped around the poles and varnished over with paint. Suddenly gongs were struck and there were four men carrying a pair of candles as big as broken pillars, and eight persons carrying a pig the size of a young calf. This pig, it was pointed out to me, had been raised and kept by the village in common for twelve years expressly for this occasion to be used as an offering to the god. Ch'eh't'ing laughed and said, "This pig's life is long, isn't it? but the god's teeth are also sharp, aren't they? I don't think I could enjoy such a huge pig, if I were a god." "However, it shows the religious devotion of the villagers," said I.

We entered the temple and saw the court and corridors were filled up with potted flowers and trees. These had not been artificially trained, but were chosen for their rugged and strange lines in their natural state, being mostly pine-trees from the Yellow Mountains, I believe. Then the theatrical performances began and the place was crowded full with people, and we went away to avoid the noise and commotion. In less than two years, however, I left the place owing to differences of opinion with my colleagues, and returned home.

During my stay at Chich'i, I saw how unspeakably dirty politics was and how low men could stoop in official life, which made me decide to change my profession from scholar to business man. I had a paternal uncle by marriage by the name of Yüan Wanchiu, who was a wine brewer by profession, living at the Fairy Pond of P'anch'i. I then went

into this business with Shih Hsinching as partner. Yüan's wines were sold chiefly overseas, and after a year there came the rebellion of Lin Shuangwen in Formosa, traffic on the sea was interrupted, and we lost money. I was then compelled to return to my profession as a salaried man, in which capacity I stayed four years in Kiangpei [northern Kiangsu], during which period I did not enjoy any travel worth recording.

Afterwards we were staying at the Hsiaoshuanglou, living like fairies on earth. The husband of my female cousin, Hsü Hsiufeng, then happened to return from Eastern Kwangtung. Seeing that I was out of a job, he said to me, "I don't see how you can get along for ever living by your pen and making your breakfast out of morning dew. Why don't you come along with me to Lingnan? I am sure you can make a lot of money there." Yün also approved and said to me, "I think you should go while our parents are still strong and you are still in your prime. It is better to make some money once for all than to live from hand to mouth like this."

I then got together some capital with the help of my friends for this venture, and Yün also personally attended to the purchase of embroidered goods, Soochow wine and wine-treated crabs, things that were not produced in Kwangtung. With the permission of my parents, I started on the tenth of October with Hsiufeng, going by way of Tungpa and coming up the Yangtse at Wuhu. This being my first trip up the Yangtse, it gave me quite a thrill. Every night when the boat lay at anchor, I would have a little drink on the bow of the boat. Once I saw a fisherman carrying a little net hardly three feet wide; the meshes were about four inches wide and its four corners were tied with strips of iron, which were apparently used as sinkers. "Although Mencius told us that a fishing net should not be too fine," I said, chuckling, "I don't see how they are going to catch any fish with such big meshes and a tiny net." Hsiufeng explained that this kind was made specially for catching *pien* fish. I noticed the net was tied to a long rope and let down into the water every now and then, as if trying to see if there was any fish around. After a while, the fisherman gave a sudden pull and there was a big *pien* fish right enough caught in it. "It is true that one is never too old to learn!" I remarked with a sigh.

One day I saw a solitary hilly island rising abruptly from the middle of the river, and learned from Hsiufeng that this was the famous "Little Orphan." There were temples and towers hidden among the frost-covered wood, but unfortunately we were prevented from visiting the place, as our boat was passing by very fast with the wind. When arriving

at the famous Tower of Prince T'en, I realized that the geographical reference to this Tower contained in the sketch by Wang Tzu-an was entirely erroneous, just as the location of Chunching Tower of Soochow was changed to the Main Wharf of Hsümen Gate.

We then embarked at the Tower on a "sampan" with upturned bow and stern, and sailed up past Kungkuan as far as Nanan, where we left the boat. The day of my arrival there happened to be my thirtieth birthday and Hsiufeng prepared a dinner of noodles in my honour. Next day we passed the Tayü Pass. On the top of the Pass there was a pavilion with a signboard reading: "I look up and the sun seems near," referring to the height of the place. The peak here was split in twain by a perpendicular cleavage in the cliffs which rose up like walls, leaving a path in the centre like a stone alleyway.<sup>10</sup> There two stone inscriptions at the entrance to the Pass, one bearing the words, "Retreat heroically before a rushing torrent" and the other containing the wise counsel: "Be satisfied with your luck this time." There was a temple on top in honour of a certain General Mei, I do not know of what dynasty.<sup>11</sup> I do not know what people mean by speaking of "plum flowers on the Pass," because I did not see a single plum-tree there; perhaps it was called the "Mei (plum) Peak" after General Mei. December was there and the pots of plum flowers which I had brought along as gifts to friends had already blossomed and the flowers had fallen off and the leaves turned yellow.

Coming out on the other side of the Pass, I saw an entirely different type of scenery. On the left, there was a hill with beautiful rocks, whose name I have forgotten, and I was informed by my sedan-chair bearers that there was a "Fairy's Bed" on it, which I had to forego the pleasure of visiting, as I was in a hurry to proceed on my way.

On reaching Nanhsiung, we engaged an old "dragon boat." At the Buddhist Hill Hamlet, I saw that over the walls of people's homes were placed many potted flowers, whose leaves were like *ilex pedunculosa* and whose flowers were like peony, in three different colours of red, pink and white. These were camelias.

We reached Canton on the fifteenth of December and stayed inside the Chinghai Gate, where we rented a three-roomed flat on the street from one Mr. Wang. Hsiufeng's customers were all local officials, and I accompanied him on his rounds of official calls. There were then many people who came to buy our goods for weddings and other ceremonial

<sup>10</sup> This is the pass on the frontier between Kiangsi and Kwangtung.

<sup>11</sup> This was General Mei Chüan, who was one of the first Chinese colonizers of Kwangtung at the beginning of Han Dynasty.

occasions, and in less than ten days all my stocks were sold. On the New Year's Eve, there were still plenty of mosquitoes humming like thunder. People wore padded gowns with crepe gowns on top during the New Year calls, and I noticed that not only was the climate here so different, but that even the native inhabitants, who had assuredly the same anatomy as ours, had such a different facial expression.

On the sixteenth of January, I was asked by three friends of my native district working in the yamen to go and see the sing-song girls on the river—a custom which was called “making rounds on the river.” The prostitutes were called “laochü.” Coming out by the Chinghai Gate, we went down little boats which looked like egg-shells cut in two, covered with a roof-matting. First we came to Shamen where the sing-song boats, called “flower boats,” were anchored in two parallel rows with a clear space in the centre for small boats to pass up and down. There were about twenty boats in one group, which were all tied up to horizontal logs to secure them against high wind. Between the boats, there were wooden piles sunk into the bottom of the river, with moveable rattan rings on top allowing the boats to rise and fall with the tide. The women keepers of these sing-song girls were called “shut'oup'o,” whose hair was done up in a high coiffure by being wound round a hollow rack of silver wires over four inches high. Their temples were decorated with flowers held there by means of long “ear picks,” and they wore black jackets and long black trousers coming down to the instep of the foot, set in contrast by sashes of green or red tied round their waists. They wore slippers without stockings like actresses on the stage, and when people came down to the boats, they would personally welcome them with a smile and lift the curtain for them to enter the cabin. There were chairs and tea tables on the sides and a big divan in the centre, with a door leading into the stern of the boat. As soon as the woman shouted “Welcome guests!” we heard a confusion of footsteps of girls coming up. Some had regular coiffures, and some had their queues done up on top of their heads, all powdered like white-washed walls and rouged like the pomegranate flowers; some in red jackets and green trousers and others in green jackets and red trousers; some bare-footed and wearing silver bracelets on their ankles and others in short socks and embroidered “butterfly shoes”; again some squatting on the divan and some leaning against the door, and all looking attentively but silently at us. I turned to Hsiufeng and said, “What is all this for?” “They are for you to choose,” said Hsiufeng. “Call any one of them that you like and she will come up to you.” I then beckoned to one, and she came forward with a smiling face and offered me a betelnut. I took a bite and finding it to be most harsh and unpalatable, spat

it out. While attempting to clean my lips with a piece of paper, I saw it was besmeared with red like blood, and this conduct of mine aroused a great laughter from the whole company.

We then passed on to the Arsenal, and found the girls at the latter place to be dressed in the same costume, except that all of them, old and young, could play the *p'ip'a*. When I spoke to them, they would answer "Mi-eh?" which means "What is it?"

"People say that one should not come to Kwangtung in one's youth, only for fear of being enticed by sing-song girls," I said. "But when I look at these with their uncouth dresses and their barbarian dialect, I don't see where's the danger."

"The Swatow girls," said a friend of mine, "are dressed exquisitely. You might have a look there."

When we went there, we found the boats to be tied up in rows as at Shamen. There was a well-known brothel keeper called Suniang, who was dressed like a woman in a Chinese circus. The girls' dresses had high collars, with silver locks hanging from their necks; their hair came down as far as the eyebrows in front and reached the shoulders at the back, with a coiffure on top looking like a maid-servant's coils; those with bound feet wore petticoats and the others wore short socks and also "butterfly shoes" beneath their long slim pants. Their dialect was barely intelligible to me, but I disliked the strange costume and was not interested.

"You know there are Yangchow sing-song girls across the river from Chinghai Gate," said Hsiufeng, "and they are all in Soochow dress. I am sure if you go, you will find someone to your liking."

"This so-called Yangchow group," explained a friend, "consists only of a brothel keeper called 'Widow Shao' and her daughter-in-law called Big Missie, who really come from Yangchow; the rest all come from Kiangsi, Hunan, Hupeh and Kwangtung."

We then went to see these Yangchow girls, and saw that there were only about a dozen boats tied up in two rows opposite each other. The women here had all puffy coiffures, broad sleeves and long petticoats were slightly powdered and rouged and spoke an intelligible dialect to me. This so-called 'Widow Shao' was very cordial to us. One of my friends then called a "wine boat," of which the bigger kind were called "henglou" and the smaller kind "shakut'ing." He wanted to be the host, and asked me to choose my girl. I chose a very young one, called Hsi-erh, who had a pair of very small feet and whose figure and expression resembled Yün, while Hsiufeng called a girl by the name of Ts'uiku, and the rest of the company asked for their old acquaintances. We then let the boat anchor in the middle of the river and had a wine feast



lasting until about nine o'clock. I was afraid that I might not be able to control myself and insisted on going home, but the city gate had been locked up at sundown, in accordance with the custom on the coast cities, of which I was informed for the first time.

At the end of the dinner, some were lying on the couch smoking opium, and some were fooling round with the girls. Amahs began to bring in bedding and were going to make the beds for us to put up there for the night—all in the same cabin. I secretly asked Hsi-erh if she could put up there for the night. She suggested a "loft"—which was a cabin on the top of a boat—but did not know whether it was occupied. I proposed then that we go and take a look, and got a sampan to row us over to Widow Shao's boat, where I saw the boat lights shining in two parallel rows like a long corridor. The loft was unoccupied then and the woman welcomed me saying, "I knew that our honourable guest was coming to-night and have purposely reserved it for you." "You are indeed the 'Fairy under the Lotus Leaves,'" I said, complimenting her with a smile. An amah then led the way with a candle in her hand up the ladder at the stern and came to the cabin, which was very small like a garret and was provided with a long couch and tables and chairs. Going through another curtained door, I entered what was the inner room, this being directly above the main cabin below. There was a bed at the side, and a square glass window in the centre admitted light from the neighbouring boats, so that the room was quite bright without a lamp of its own. The bedding, curtains and the dressing-table were all of a fine quality.

"We can get a beautiful view of the moon from the terrace," Hsi-erh suggested to me. I then crawled out through a window over the hatchway and reached what was the top of the stern. The deck was bounded on three sides with low railings. A full moon was shining from a clear sky on the wide expanse of water, wine boats were lying here and there like floating leaves, and their lights dotted the water surface like stars in the firmament. Through this picture, small sampans were threading their way and the music of string instruments and song was mixed with the distant rumble of the waves. I felt quite moved and said, "This is the reason why 'one shouldn't visit Kwangtung in one's youth!'" Unfortunately my wife Yün was not able to accompany me here.<sup>12</sup> I turned round and looked at Hsi-erh and saw that her face resembled Yün's under the hazy moonlight, and I escorted her back to the cabin, put out the light and went to bed.

Next morning Hsiufeng and the other friends appeared at the cabin

<sup>12</sup> Yün was living then, for the story is not told in chronological order from chapter to chapter, as the reader might suppose.

early at dawn. I hastily put on my gown and got up to meet them, but was scolded by everyone for deserting them last night. "I was afraid of you people teasing me at night and was only trying to get a little privacy," I explained. Then we went home together.

A few days after this, I went with Hsiufeng to visit the Sea Pearl Temple. This was situated in the middle of the river and surrounded like a city by walls with gun-holes about five feet from the water in which were placed cannon for defence against pirates. As the tide rose and fell the gun-holes seemed to shift up and down above the water level—an optical illusion which was truly amazing. The "Thirteen Foreign Firms" were situated on the west of the Yulanmen or Secluded Orchid Gate, the building structures looking just like those in a foreign painting. Across the water was a place called the "Garden Patch," being full of flower trees, for it was the flower market of Canton. I had always prided myself on knowing every variety of flower, but here I found that thirty or forty per cent. of the flowers were unknown to me. I asked for their names and found that some of them were never recorded in the *Ch'ünfangp'u* ("Dictionary of Flowers"), perhaps accountable through the difference of dialects.

The Sea Screen Temple was built on a gigantic scale. Inside the temple gate there was a banyan tree over ten fathoms in circumference, whose thick evergreen foliage looked like a green umbrella. The railings and pillars of this temple were all made of "iron-pearwood." There was a linden tree whose leaves resembled those of the persimmon. One could scrape off the outer surface of these leaves after immersing them in water for some time, when the network of the fibre could be seen as fine as the wings of the cicada, and have them bound up into little volumes for the purpose of copying Buddhist texts.

We looked for Hsi-erh among the flower boats on our way home, and it happened that both Ts'uiku and Hsi-erh were free. After having a cup of tea, we were going to leave but were begged again and again to stay. I had a mind to go to the loft again, but it was occupied at the time by a guest of Big Missie's, the widow's daughter-in-law. So I suggested to the widow that if the girls could come along to our house, I would be glad to spend an evening with them. The widow agreed, and Hsiufeng returned home first to order a dinner, while I followed later with the girls. While we were chatting and joking together, our landlord Wang Moulao unexpectedly turned up and was therefore asked to join us. We were just raising the wine-cups to our lips, when we heard a great noise of people downstairs, as if some men were attempting to come up. What really happened was that our landlord had a ne'er-do-well nephew who had learnt that we had invited sing-song girls to the house and was

trying to blackmail us. Hsiufeng said regretfully, "This all comes of Sanpo's<sup>13</sup> sudden desire for some fun. I shouldn't have followed his example." "This is no time for argument," I said. "We must think of some ways and means to get out of the situation." Moulao offered to go down and speak to the people while I instructed the servants to order two sedan-chairs for the girls to slip away first, and then see how we could manage to get out of the city. We learnt that the people could not be persuaded to leave the house, nor were they coming up. Meanwhile, the two sedan-chairs were ready, and I ordered my servant, who was a strong, agile fellow, to lead the way; Hsiufeng followed him with Ts'uiku, while I and Hsi-erh brought up the rear; then we rushed downstairs, intending to break through. With the help of the servant, Hsiufeng and Ts'uiku disappeared outside the door, but Hsi-erh was caught by someone. I raised my leg and kicked the fellow's arm. Released from the hold, Hsi-erh dashed out and I escaped after her. My servant was standing guard at the door to prevent the rascals from pursuing us.

"Have you seen Hsi-erh?" I asked my servant.

"Ts'uiku has gone ahead in a sedan-chair," replied the servant, "and I have seen Hsi-erh come out also, but haven't seen her going into a sedan-chair."

I then lighted a torch and saw that the empty sedan-chair was still standing there. Hurriedly I rushed to the Chinghai Gate and saw Hsiufeng standing there by the side of Ts'uiku's sedan-chair. In answer to my enquiry about Hsi-erh, he said that she might have gone off in an opposite direction by mistake. Quickly I turned back and passed a dozen houses before I heard somebody calling to me from a dark corner. I held up the light and saw it was indeed herself. I then put her in a sedan-chair and was starting, when Hsiufeng rushed to the place and informed me that there was a water-gate at the Yulanmen, and that he had asked somebody to bribe the gate-keeper.

"Ts'uiku has gone ahead, and Hsi-erh should follow immediately," he said.

"You leave the girls in my care, while you go home and try to talk the rascals down," I told Hsiufeng.

When we arrived at the water-gate, it had indeed been opened for us, and Ts'uiku had been waiting there. Holding Hsi-erh with my left arm and Ts'uiku with my right, I crawled out of the water-gate with them like fugitives. There was a light shower and the roads were slippery, and when we reached Shamen, the place was still full of music and song. Someone in a sampan knew Ts'uiku and called out to her to come aboard.

<sup>13</sup> Author's name.

Only after going down the boat did I discover that Hsi-erh's hair was all dishevelled and all her hairpins and bangles had disappeared.

"Why, have you been robbed?" I asked.

"No," she smiled. "I was told that they are all solid gold and they belong to my adopted mother. I secretly put them away in my pocket as we were coming downstairs. It would be awful if I were robbed and you had to pay for the loss."

I heard what she said and felt very grateful to her. I then asked her to dress up again and not to tell her adopted mother about the whole incident, but merely to say that there were too many people in our house and that she preferred to come back to the boat. Ts'uiku told this to her mother accordingly, adding that they had had a full dinner and wanted only some congee.

By this time the guest at the loft had already left and the widow asked Ts'uiku also to accompany me to the room. I noticed that Ts'uiku's and Hsi-erh's embroidered shoes were already wet through and covered with mud. We three then sat down to have some congee together, in default of a proper evening meal. During the conversation under the candle-light, I learned that Ts'uiku came from Hunan and Hsi-erh from Honan, and that Hsi-erh's real family name was Ouyang, but that after the death of her father and the remarriage of her mother, she had been sold by a wicked uncle of hers. Ts'uiku told me how hard the sing-song girls' life was: they had to smile when not happy, had to drink when they couldn't stand the wine, had to keep company when they weren't feeling well, and had to sing when their throats were tired; besides, there were people of a rough sort who would, at the slightest dissatisfaction, throw wine-pots, overturn tables and indulge in loud abuse and, on top of that, the girls might receive all the blame, as far as the woman keeper was concerned. There were also ill-bred customers who must continue their horse-play throughout the night until it was quite unbearable. She said that Hsi-erh was young and had just arrived, and the woman was very kind to her on that account. While recounting all her troubles, some tears had unconsciously rolled down Ts'uiku's cheeks, and Hsi-erh was also weeping silently. I then took Hsi-erh in my lap and comforted her, while I asked Ts'uiku to sleep in the outer room because she was a friend of Hsiufeng's.

From this time on, they would send for us every five or ten days, and sometimes Hsi-erh would come personally in a sampan to the river bank to welcome me. Every time I went, I had Hsiufeng for company, without asking any other guests or hiring another boat, and this cost us only four dollars a night. Hsiufeng used to go from one girl to another, or "jump the trough," in the sing-song slang, and sometimes even had

two girls at the same time, while I stuck only to Hsi-erh. Sometimes I went alone and either had a little drink on the deck or a quiet talk at the loft. I did not ask her to sing, or compel her to drink, being most considerate to her, and we felt very happy together. The other girls all envied her, and some of them, while unoccupied and learning that I was at the loft, would come and visit me. Thus I came to know every single one of them there, and when I went up the boat, I was greeted with a chorus of welcome. I had enough to do to give each a courteous reply, and this was a welcome that could not be bought with tens of thousands of dollars.

For four months I stayed there, spending altogether over a hundred dollars. I always regarded the experience of eating fresh *lichi* there as one of the greatest joys in my life. Later on, the woman wanted me to marry Hsi-erh for the sum of five hundred dollars. Her insistence rather annoyed me and I planned to return home. Hsiufeng, on the other hand, was very far gone with the girls, and I persuaded him to buy a concubine and returned to Soochow by the original route. Hsiufeng went back the following year, but my father forbade me to accompany him. After that I accepted an invitation to work under magistrate Yang of Ch'ingp'u. On coming home, Hsiufeng recounted to me how Hsi-erh had several times attempted suicide because I didn't go back. Alas!

Awakening from a half year's Yang-group dream,  
I acquired a fickle name among the girls.<sup>14</sup>

During the two years at Ch'ingp'u, after my return from Kwangtung, I did not visit any place worthy of mention. It was soon after this that Yün and Han met each other and caused a great sensation among our relatives and friends, and Yün's health broke down on account of disappointment in Han. I had set up, with one Mr. Ch'eng Mo-an, a shop for selling books and paintings next door to our house, which helped somewhat to pay for the expenses of the doctor and medicine.

Two days after the Mid-Autumn Festival, I was invited by Wu Yünp'eh together with Mao Yihsiang and Wang Hsinglan to go and visit the Little Quiet Lodge at the Western Hill. It happened that I had an order to execute and asked them to go ahead first. "If you will come along," said Wu, "we shall wait for you to-morrow noon at the Come Ye Storks Temple by the Shuita Bridge at the foot of the hill." To this proposition I agreed, and on the following day, I asked Ch'eng

<sup>14</sup> This is an adaptation from two famous lines by Tu Mu.

to stay behind and keep shop for me, while I went on foot alone. Passing through the Ch'angmen Gate, I reached the foot of the hill, went over the Shuita Bridge and followed the country path westwards until I saw a temple facing south, girdled by a clear stream outside its walls. Someone answered the door and asked me where I had come from. On being told the purpose of my visit, he informed me with an amused smile that this was the Tehyün Temple, 'as I might see from the characters above the gate, and that I had already passed the Come Ye Storks. I said that I had not seen any temple this side of the bridge, and then he pointed out to me a mud wall enclosing a bamboo thicket. I then retraced my steps to the foot of the wall, where I saw a small closed door. Peeping through a hole in the door, I saw some winding paths, a low fence and some delightfully green bamboo trees in the yard, but not a soul in the place. I knocked and there was no reply. Someone passed by and said to me, "There is a stone in a hole in the wall which is used for knocking." I followed his instruction and after repeated knocking, indeed an acolyte appeared.

I then went in along the path, passed a little stone bridge, and after turning west, saw a monastery door with a black-varnished signboard bearing characters in white "Come Ye Storks," with a long postscript which I did not stop to read. Entering it and passing through the first hall, I was struck by the extreme neatness and cleanliness of the place, and realized that its owner must be a person who loved quiet and solitude. Suddenly I saw another acolyte appear down the corridor on the left with a wine-pot in his hand. I shouted to him in a loud voice and demanded to know where my friends were. Then I heard Hsinglan's voice chuckling in the room: "How about it now? I knew that Sanpo would keep his word!" Then Yünk'eh came out to welcome me and said, "We have been waiting for you to have breakfast with us. Why do you come so late?" Behind him stood a monk who nodded to me, and I learned his monastic name was Chuyi.

I entered the room, which consisted merely of three beams, with a signboard reading "The Cassia Studio." Two cassia trees were standing in full bloom in the courtyard. Both Hsinglan and Yihsiang got up and shouted to me, "You must be penalized three cups for coming late!" On the table there were very nice, pretty vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, with both yellow and white wine. I inquired how many places they had visited, and Yünk'eh told me that it was already late when they arrived the night before, and that they had visited only the two places Tehyün and Hot'ing that morning. We then had a very enjoyable drinking party for a long time, and after dinner we went again in the direction of Tehyün and Hot'ing and visited eight or nine

places as far as the Huashan Hill, all beautiful in their own ways, but impossible to go into with full details here.

There was a Lotus Peak on top of the Huashan Hill, but as it was already getting late, we promised ourselves we would visit it another time. At this spot, the cassia flowers reached the greatest profusion. We had a nice cup of tea under the flowers and then took mountain sedan-chairs back to the Come Ye Storks Temple. A table was already laid in a little open hall on the east of the Cassia Studio. Monk Chuyi was by nature reticent, but a great drinker and very fond of company. At first we played a game with a twig of cassia,<sup>15</sup> and later each one was required to drink one round, and we did not break up till the second watch in the night.

"The moon is so beautiful to-night," I said. "It would be a pity to sleep in here. Can't we find a nice and high place, where we could enjoy the moon and spend the time in a way worthy of a night like this?"

"Let's go up to the Flying Stork Pavilion," suggested Chuyi.

"Hsinglan has brought a *ch'in* along," said Yünk'eh, "but we haven't heard him play on it yet. How about going there and playing it for us?"

We then started together and saw on our way a stretch of trees enveloped in the silvery shadows of the night and buried in the fragrance of *osmanthus fragrans*. All was peace and quiet under the moonlight and the universe seemed a stretch of long silence. Hsinglan played for us the "Three Stanzas of Plum-Blossoms" with ethereal lightness. Caught by the gaiety of the moment, Yihsiang also took out his iron flute and played a low, plaintive melody. "I am sure," remarked Yünk'eh, "of all the people who are enjoying the moon to-night at Shih-hu Lake, none can be quite as happy as we." This was true enough because it was the custom at Soochow for people to gather together under the Pacing Spring Bridge at the Shih-hu Lake on the eighteenth of the eighth moon and look at the golden chain of the moon's image in the water; the place was packed full with people in pleasure boats, and music and song were kept up throughout the night, but although they were supposed to be enjoying the moon, actually they were only having a night of carousal in the company of prostitutes. Soon the moon went down and the night was cold, and we retired to sleep after having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

The next morning, Yünk'eh said to all of us, "There is a Temple of Candour round about here in a very secluded spot. Have any of you

<sup>15</sup> This is a game similar to "Going to Jerusalem." A twig of cassia blossoms was passed round from hand to hand as long as the beat of the drum continued. The one found with the twig in his hand when the drum stopped beating was required to drink.

been there?" We all replied that we had not even heard of the name, not to speak of having been to the place.

"This Temple of Candour is surrounded by hills on all sides," explained Chuyi, "and it is so entirely out-of-the-way that even monks cannot stay there for a long time. The last time I was there several years ago, the place was in ruins. I hear it has been rebuilt by the scholar P'eng Ch'ihmu, but have not seen it since. I suppose I could still locate the place, and if you all agree, I'll be your guide."

"Are we going there on an empty stomach?" asked Yihsiang.

"I have already prepared some vegetarian noodle," said Chuyi laughingly, "and we can ask the Taoist monk to follow us with a case of wine."

After eating the noodle, we started off on foot. As we passed the Garden of High Virtue, Yüñk'eh wanted to go into the White Cloud Villa. We entered the place and had seated ourselves, when a monk came out gracefully and curtsied to Yüñk'eh saying, "Haven't seen you for two months! And what's the news from the city? And is the Governor still in his yamen?"

"The baldhead snob!" said Yihsiang, and got up abruptly and swept out of the room. Hsinglan and I followed him out, barely able to conceal our laughter. Yüñk'eh and Chuyi remained behind to exchange a few words with the monk out of mere politeness and then also took leave. . . .

In the spring of 1804 during the reign of Chiach'ing, I was about to leave home and become a recluse consequent upon the death of my father, when my friend Hsia Yishan kindly invited me to stay at his home. In the eighth moon of that year he asked me to accompany him to Tunghai, where he was going to collect crops from his farms at the Yungt'ai Beach. This sandy beach belonged to Ts'ungming *hsien* and was reached by the sea over a hundred *li* from Liuho. The beach had newly arisen from the bottom of the Yangtse River and been only recently cultivated; there were no streets yet and very little human habitation, and the place was covered with reeds for miles round. There was, besides Mr. Hsia, only one Mr. Ting who owned property there and had a grainage with over a score of rooms, which was surrounded on all sides by a moat and outside this, by an embankment grown over with willows.

Ting's personal name was Shihch'u; he came from Ts'ungming and was the head of the whole beach settlement. He had a shroff by the name of Wang, and these two were frank, jolly souls, being very fond of company, and treated us like old friends soon after our arrival. He used to kill a pig and provide a whole jar of wine to entertain us at dinner;



at such drinking parties, he always played the finger guessing game, being ignorant of any games of poetry, and being equally innocent of any musical knowledge, used to crow when he felt like singing. After treating himself to a generous drink, he would call the farm-hands together and make them hold wrestling or boxing matches for a pastime. He kept over a hundred head of cattle which stayed unsheltered on the embankments at night, and also a pack of geese for the purpose of raising an alarm against pirates. In the day-time, he would go hunting with his eagle and his dogs among the reeds and marshes, and return with a good bag of game. I used to accompany him in these hunts and lie down anywhere to sleep when tired.

Once he took me to the farms where the grains were ripe; these were all serially numbered and around each farm was built a high embankment for protection against the tides. This was provided with a lock for regulating the water level, being opened during high tide to let in the water when the field was too dry, and at low tide to let the water out when it was overflowed. The farm-hands' cottages were scattered all over the place, but the men could gather together at instant notice. These men addressed their employer as "master of the property," and were very obedient and charmingly simple and honest. Roused by any act of injustice, they could be fiercer than wild beasts, but if you said a word that appealed to their fair play, they could be just as quickly pacified. It was a life of simple struggle with the elements of nature, dreary and powerful and wild, like that of primæval times.

There one could see the sea from one's bed, and listen to the roaring waves that sounded like war-drums from one's pillow. One night I suddenly saw miles and miles away a red light, about the size of a big basket, bobbing up and down upon the high sea, and the horizon reddened as if illuminated by a great fire. "There is a 'spirit fire,'" said Shihch'u to me. "Its appearance is an omen that very soon more land will rise up from the bottom of the river." Yishan was usually of a romantic turn of mind, and he became all the more abandoned and carefree in his ways here. In the absence of all conventional restraints, I would yell and sing on the back of a buffalo or, inspired by alcohol, dance and cavort on the beach and do anything my fancy dictated. This was the pleasantest and most romantic bit of travel that I ever enjoyed in my life. Business done, we left the place and came home in October.

Of all the scenic beauties of Soochow I like best "A Thousand Acres of Clouds," and next the Sword Pond. With the exception of these two places, they are all too much belaboured by human effort and contamin-

ated by the atmosphere of social luxury, thereby losing all the quiet native charm of nature. Even the newly erected Pagoda Shadows Bridge and the Temple of Pokung are only interesting as preserving an historical interest. The Yehfangpin, which I playfully wrote with another three characters meaning the "Bank of Rural Fragrance" is only a place for sing-song girls to flirt with passers-by in their promenades. Inside the city, there is the famous Shihtsulin ("Lion's Forest"), supposed to be in the style of the famous painter Ni Yünlin, which, despite its many old trees and elegant rocks, resembles on the whole more a refuse heap of coal ashes bedecked with moss and ant-holes, without any suggestion of the natural rhythm of sweeping hills and towering forests. For an uncultivated person like myself, I just fail to see where its beauty lies.

The Lingyenshan<sup>16</sup> is associated with the famous beauty of old, Hsishih, who lived here as the court favourite of the King of Wu. There are places of interest on top like Hsishih's Cave, the Corridor of Musical Shoes and the Canal for Picking Fragrance. However, it is a straggling type of landscape, in need of some tightening, and is therefore not to be compared with the T'ien'ing and Chihhsing hills in charm and beauty.

The Tengweishan is also known as 'Yüan Tomb'; it faces the Chinfeng Peak on the east and the Taihu Lake on the west, and with its red cliffs and green towers, the whole hill looks like a painting. The inhabitants here plant plums for their living, and when these flowers are in bloom, there is a stretch of white blossoms for miles and miles looking like snow, which is the reason why the place is called "The Sea of Fragrant Snow." There are four old cypress trees on the left of the hill which have been given the four respective names, "Pure," "Rare," "Antique" and "Quaint." "Pure" goes up by a long straight trunk, spreading out a foliage on top resembling a parasol; "Rare" couches on the ground and rolls itself into three zigzag bends resembling the character *chih* (Z); "Antique" is baldheaded at the top and broad and stumpy, with its straggling limbs half dried-up and resembling a man's fingers; and "Quaint's" trunk twists round spirally all the way up to its highest branches. According to tradition, these trees are older than the Han Dynasty. In January of 1805, Yishan's father Shuhsiang, his uncle Chiehshih and four of the younger generation went to P'ushan for the spring sacrifice at their ancestral temple as well as to visit their ancestral tombs, and I was invited to accompany them. We first visited Lingyenshan on our way, came out by the Hushan Bridge and arrived at the Sea of Fragrant Snow by way of Feichia River to look at the plum blossoms there. Their ancestral temple at P'ushan was buried in this

<sup>16</sup> This and the following hills are all within a short distance of Soochow.

"Sea of Fragrant Snow" and in the all-pervading glory of the plum-flowers, even our coughs and spitings seemed perfumed. I painted twelve pictures of the trees of P'ushan and presented them to Chiehshih as a souvenir.

In September of the same year, I accompanied His Honour Shih Chot'ang on the voyage to his office at Chungking in Szechuen. Following the Yangtse up, we came to Yüanshan Hill, where was Yü's Tomb, belonging to a loyal Chinese minister at the end of the Mongol Dynasty. By the side of his tomb, there was a hall called the Majestic View Pavilion, a three-roomed affair, facing the South Lake in front and looking out on the Ch'ien-shan Hill at its back. The Pavilion was situated on a knoll and therefore commanded an open view of the distance. It was open on the north side, and by its side was a long covered corridor. The tree leaves were just turning red, resplendent like peach and pear blossoms.

At this time Chiang Shoupeng and Ts'ai Tsech'in were travelling with me. Outside the South Gate there was Wang's Garden, which consisted of a long narrow strip of land running east and west, being limited on the south by the lake and on the north by the city wall, presenting a most difficult problem for the architect. The problem was ingeniously solved, however, by having serried terraces and storeyed towers. By 'serried terraces' is meant building of courtyards on the roof gardens, provided with rockeries and flower trees in such a manner that visitors would hardly suspect a house underneath; the rockeries standing on what was solid ground below and the courtyards on tops of buildings, so that the flowers actually grew upon the soil. And by 'storeyed towers' is meant crowning an upper storey with an open tower on top, and again crowning the latter with an open terrace, so that the whole consisted of four storeys going from one to another in an artfully irregular manner; there were also small pools actually holding water at different levels so that one could hardly tell whether one was standing on solid ground or on a top floor. The basic structures consisted entirely of bricks and stone, with the supports made in the western style. It was fortunately situated on the lake, so that one actually gained a better unobstructed view of the surrounding country than from an ordinary garden on a piece of flat ground. This garden seemed to me to show a marvellous human ingenuity.

The Tower of Yellow Stork at Wuchang is situated on the Yellow Stork Cliff, being connected with the Yellow Stork Hill at the back, popularly known as the Snake Hill. The three-storeyed Tower with its beautifully painted eaves and girders, stood on top of the city overlook-

ing the Han River in a way that counterbalanced the Ch'ingch'üan Tower at Hanyang on the opposite shore. I went up the Tower one snowy day with Chot'ang; the beautiful snow flakes dancing in the sky above and silver-clad hills and jade-bedraggled trees below gave one the impression of a fairy world. Little boats passed up and down the river, tossed about by the waves like falling leaves in a storm. Looking at a view like this somehow made one feel the vanity of life and the futility of its struggles. There were a lot of poems written on the walls of the Tower, which I have all forgotten with the exception of a couplet running as follows: <sup>17</sup>

"When the yellow stork comes again,  
let's together empty the golden goblet,  
pouring wine-offering  
over the thousand-year green meadow  
on the isle.

"Just look at the white clouds sailing off,  
and who will play the jade flute,  
sending its melodies  
down the fifth-moon plum-blossoms  
in the city?"

That year in November we reached Kingchow. Chot'ang had then received the news of his promotion to *taot'ai* at Tungkuan, and I was asked to stay behind at Kingchow, thus forfeiting an opportunity to see the beautiful hills and waters of Szechuen, to my great regret. Chot'ang went there alone, leaving me with Ts'ai Tzuch'in and Hsi Chiht'ang and his son Tunfu and family. . . .

Towards New Year's Eve it snowed, and the weather was very severe. During the New Year festival we were free from the red-tape of New Year calls, but spent the days firing fire-crackers, flying kites and making paper lanterns to amuse ourselves. Soon the warm wind of spring awakened all the flowers and the spring showers moistened the earth, and Chot'ang's concubines arrived from up-river with his young daughter and baby boy. Tunfu then began to pack up and we started on the voyage north together, going on land from Fanch-eng, and went straight to Tungkuan.

Passing from the west of Wenhsiang *hsien* of Honan, we came to

<sup>17</sup> In a Chinese couplet, which one sees everywhere in halls and parlours and temples, every word in one member must have a word of the same class and reversed tone in the corresponding position in the other member. With the exception of "the's," this can be seen in the translation given herewith.

the Hankukuan Pass, which Laotzu passed through on the back of a black cow when he was retiring from the world. There was an inscription which bore the words, "The Purple Air Comes from the East." The Pass consisted of a narrow footpath between two high mountains, barely allowing two horses to go together. About ten *li* from Hankukuan was the Tungkuan Pass, with a perpendicular cliff on one side and the Yellow River on the other. A fortress was erected at this strategic spot with a series of most imposing towers and ramparts, but there were few inhabitants around the place and hardly any traffic. The line which Han Yü wrote, "The sun is shining upon Tungkuan with its doors all open" seems also to refer to the desolate appearance of the place. . . .

I stayed in the southern part of the garden in a boat-shaped house, where there was a courtyard with a pavilion on top of a mound, from which one could obtain a general view of the whole garden. The house was protected by the green shade of trees on all sides so that one did not feel the heat in summer. Chot'ang kindly named the studio for me: "An Unanchored Boat." This was the best house I ever lived in during the period I served as a yamen secretary. There were scores of varieties of cultivated chrysanthemums around the mound, but unfortunately Chot'ang was promoted to an inspectorship in Shantung before the season for chrysanthemums came.

It was then that this family moved to the T'ungch'uan College where I accompanied them, while Chot'ang went to his office first. Tsch'in, Chih't'ang and myself were left without anything to do then and we often went for an outing. One day we went on horseback to the Huayin Temple, passing through the Huafeng village, the place where old Emperor Yao prayed three times for his people. There were at the Temple many locust trees dating back to the Ch'in Dynasty and cypress trees of the Han Dynasty, mostly three or four fathoms in circumference, some locust trees growing inside a cypress, and some cypresses growing inside a locust tree. There were any number of old stone inscriptions in the different courtyards, with one in particular consisting of the characters for "Good Luck" and "Longevity" written by Ch'en Hsiyi. There was a Jade Fountain Court at the foot of the Huashan where Ch'en had departed from this earth as a Taoist fairy. His image, in a couching position, lay on a stone bed in a very small cave. At this place, the water was very clear and the sands nice and clean; most of the vegetation was of a deep red colour and there was a very rapid mountain stream flowing through a thick bamboo grove. A square pavilion stood outside the cave with the signboard: "Carefree Pavilion." By its side were three old trees, whose barks were cracked like broken coal and whose leaves resembled those of the locust

tree, but were of a deeper colour. I did not know their name, but the natives aptly and conveniently called them "carefree trees."

I have no idea how many thousand feet high the Huashan mountains are and regret very much not having been able to pack up some dry provisions and go exploring them for a few days. On my way back I saw some wild persimmons, which were of a ripe colour. I picked one from the tree while on horseback, and was going to eat it then and there. The native people tried to stop me, but I wouldn't listen to them. Only after taking a bite did I find it to have a very harsh flavour. So much so that I quickly spat it out and had to come down from horseback and rinse my mouth at a spring before I could speak, to the great merriment of my native advisers. For persimmons should be boiled in order to take away their harsh flavour, but I learned this a little too late.

In the beginning of October, Chot'ang sent a special messenger to bring his family to Shantung, and we left Tungkuan and came to Shantung by way of Honan. The Taming Lake is in the western part of Tsinan city in Shantung, with places of interest like the Lihsia and Shuihsiang Pavilions. It was most enjoyable to go boating around the lake with a few bottles of wine, and enjoy the fragrance of lotus flowers under the cool shade of willow trees in summer. I went there, however, on a winter day and saw only a stretch of cold water against some sparse willow trees and a frosty sky. The Paotu Spring ranks first among the seventy-two springs of Tsinan. The spring consists of three holes with water gushing forth from underneath and bubbling up like a boiling cauldron, in strange contrast to other springs whose water usually flows downwards. There is a storeyed building on the pond, with an altar to Lüchu inside, where the tourists used to stop and taste tea made from the spring water.

In the second month of the following year, I went to my office at Laiyang (Shantung). In 1807, Chot'ang was demoted to be *Hanlin*, and I followed him to the capital (Peking). I never saw the reputed mirage on the coast of Tengchow.

CHINESE  
WIT AND  
WISDOM





# Parables of Ancient Philosophers

## INTRODUCTION

ALL ANCIENT CHINESE PHILOSOPHERS spoke parables and drew stories from actual life or invented them to illustrate their points. It will be seen from the parables contained in the selections from Chuangtse that this was a typical and habitual mode of expression with the early philosophers of the fourth and third centuries B.C., and that the narrator could invent conversations by Confucius, Laotse, Ts'angwutse and the Yellow Emperor with absolute freedom. I have included here some of the best and most popular ones from the ancient texts. The first two are by Chuangtse which are not included in the preceding selections from that philosopher. The great majority come from the book of Liehtse; very little is known about this person, who was alleged to have lived at the time of or before Chuangtse (who died about 275 B.C.), and the books under his name are generally considered to be of a much earlier date, but contain the same Taoist point of view. Han Fei, or Hanfeitse, who died in 234 B.C., was one of the great philosophers of the Legalist School, with traces of Taoist influence. Liu Hsiang was a famous and important author and editor of Han Dynasty and lived in 77-6 B.C. The *Chankuots'eh* is a well-known book containing the clever speeches and strategies of scholars of the Warring Kingdoms (fourth and third centuries B.C.). It is a book full of witticisms and profound or clever speeches used by scholars who travelled about to counsel the kings during that period of wars and alliances and counter-alliances. Finally I have included one parable ("The Blind Man's Idea of the Sun") by the great genial poet of Sung Dynasty, Su Tungp'o. This parable has been used by Albert Einstein to illustrate the average man's idea of his theory of relativity.

# Parables of Ancient Philosophers

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

## THE MAN WHO SPURNED THE MACHINE

WHEN TSEKUNG, the disciple of Confucius, came south to the state of Ch'u on his way to Chin, he passed through Hanyin. There he saw an old man engaged in making a ditch to connect his vegetable garden with a well. He carried a pitcher in his hand, with which he was bringing up water and pouring it into the ditch, with very great labour and little results.

"If you had a machine here," said Tsekung, "in a day you could irrigate a hundred times your present area. The labour required is trifling compared with the work done. Would you not like to have one?"

"What is it?" asked the gardener, looking up at him.

"It is a contrivance made of wood, heavy behind and light in front. It draws water up smoothly in a continuous flow, which bubbles forth like boiling soup. It is called a well-sweep."

Thereupon the gardener flushed up and said with a laugh, "I have heard from my teacher that those who have cunning implements are cunning in their dealings, and those who are cunning in their dealings have cunning in their hearts, and those who have cunning in their hearts cannot be pure and incorrupt, and those who are not pure and incorrupt in their hearts are restless in spirit. Those who are restless in spirit are not fit vehicles for Tao. It is not that I do not know of these things. I should be ashamed to use them."

Tsekung's countenance fell, humiliated, and he felt discomfited and abashed. It was not till they had gone thirty *li* that he recovered his composure.

"Who was that man?" asked his disciples. "Why did your face change colour after seeing him, and why did you seem lost for a whole day?"

"I thought," replied Tsekung, "there was only one man (Confucius) in this world. But I did not know there was this man. I have heard from the Master that the test of a scheme is its practicability and the goal of effort is success, and that we should achieve the greatest results with the least labour. Not so this manner of man. Coming into life, he lives among the people, not knowing whither he is bound, infinitely complete in himself. Success, utility and the knowledge of skills would certainly make man lose the human heart. But this man goes nowhere against his will and does nothing contrary to his heart, master of himself, above the praise and blame of the world. He is a perfect man."

—CHUANGTSE

### DO-NOTHING SAY-NOTHING

When Knowledge travelled north, across the Black Water and over the Dark Steep Mountain, he met Do-nothing Say-nothing and asked him about Tao, and Do-nothing Say-nothing did not reply.

He turned back and went to the south of the White Water, up the Fox Hill and asked All-in-extremes about Tao. "Ha! I know. I will tell you . . ." But just as he was about to speak, he seemed to forget what he was going to say and Knowledge also received no reply.

Then he came back to the royal palace and asked the Yellow Emperor concerning Tao. And the latter said, "Man becomes alive from the collection of the vital spirit. When the vital spirit collects, he is alive, and when it scatters, he dies. If life and death are steady companions, why should I care?"

"Therefore all things are one. What we love is the mystery of life. What we hate is corruption in death. But the corruptible in turn becomes mysterious life, and mysterious life once more becomes corruptible. The world is permeated by one spirit. Therefore the Sage places value upon Unity."

"Then you and I know Tao, and they don't," said Knowledge.

"Do-nothing Say-nothing was right," replied the Yellow Emperor. "All-in-extremes was quite near it. But you and I are still far from Tao. He who knows does not speak, and he who speaks does not know."

"I asked Do-nothing Say-nothing about Tao," said Knowledge, "but he did not answer me. Not that he would not, but he could not. So I asked All-in-extremes. He was just going to tell me, but he did not tell me. Not that he would not, but just as he was going to do so, he forgot

what he wanted to say. Now I ask you and you are able to tell me. Why do you say, therefore, that you are far from Tao?"

"Of the two," replied the Yellow Emperor, "the former was genuinely right, because he really did not know. The latter was quite near it, because he had forgotten. You and I are still far from Tao, because we know."

When All-in-extremes heard this remark, he praised the Yellow Emperor for knowing what he was talking about.

— CHUANGTSE

### THE CONCEALED DEER

There was a woodcutter in Cheng who came across a frightened deer in the country and shot and killed it. Afraid that other people might see it, he hid it in a grove and covered it with chopped wood and branches, and was greatly delighted. Soon afterwards, however, he forgot where he had hid the deer, and believed it must have all happened in a dream. As a dream, he told it to everybody in the streets. Now among the listeners there was one who heard the story of his dream and went to search for the concealed deer and found it. He brought the deer home and told his wife, "There is a woodcutter who dreamed he had killed a deer and forgot where he hid it, and here I have found it. He is really a dreamer."

"You must have dreamed yourself that you saw a woodcutter who had killed a deer. Do you really believe that there was a real woodcutter? But now you have really got a deer, so your dream must have been a true one," said his wife.

"Even if I've found the deer by a dream," answered the husband, "what's the use of worrying whether it is he who was dreaming, or I?"

That night, the woodcutter went home, still thinking of his deer, and he really had a dream, and in that dream, he dreamed back the place of hiding of the deer and also its finder. Early at dawn, he went to the finder's house and found the deer. The two then had a dispute and they went to a judge to settle it. And the judge said to the woodcutter:

"You really killed a deer and thought it was a dream. Then you really had a dream and thought it was reality. He really found the deer and is now disputing with you about it, but his wife thinks that he had dreamt that he had found a deer shot by someone else. Hence no one really shot the deer. Since we have the deer before our eyes, you may divide it between you two."

The story was brought to the ears of the King of Cheng, and the King

of Cheng said, "Ah, ah! Isn't the judge dreaming again that he is dividing the deer for people?"

—LIEHTSE

### THE MAN WHO FORGOT

There was a man in Sung by the name of Huatse, who developed in his middle age a peculiar malady of forgetting everything. He would take a thing in the morning and forget about it at night, and receive a thing at night and forget about it in the morning. While in the streets he forgot to walk, and while standing in the house, he forgot to sit down. He could not remember the past in the present, and could not remember the present in the future. And the whole family were greatly annoyed by it. They consulted the soothsayer and they could not divine it, and they consulted the witch and prayers could not cure it, and they consulted the physician and the physician was helpless. But there was a Confucian scholar in the country of Lu who said he could cure him. So the family of Huatse offered him the half of their property if he should cure him of this strange malady. And the Confucian scholar said:

"His malady is not something which can be cured by soothsaying or prayer or medicine. I shall try to cure his mind and change the objects of his thought, and maybe he'll be cured."

So he exposed Huatse to cold and Huatse asked for clothing, exposed Huatse to hunger, and Huatse asked for food, and shut Huatse up in a dark room, and Huatse asked for light. He kept him in a room all by himself for seven days and cared not what he was doing all this time. And the illness of years was cured in a day.

When Huatse was cured and learned about it, he was furious. He scolded his wife and punished his children and drove away the Confucian scholar from his house with a spear. The people of the country asked Huatse why he did so, and Huatse replied:

"When I was submerged in the sea of forgetfulness, I did not know whether the heaven and earth existed or not. Now they have waked me up, and all the successes and disappointments and joys and sorrows and loves and hatreds of the past decades have come back to disturb my breast. I am afraid that in the future, the successes and disappointments and joys and sorrows and loves and hatreds will continue to oppress my mind as they are oppressing me now. Can I ever recover even a moment of forgetfulness?"

—LIEHTSE

## CHI LIANG'S PHYSICIANS

Yang Chu had a friend by the name of Chi Liang. One day Chi Liang fell ill, and after seven days, he became very serious. His sons wept by his bedside and asked for a doctor.

"I have such unworthy sons," said Chi Liang to Yang Chu. "Will you not sing a song to make them understand?"

So Yang Chu sang:

*Heaven does not know  
Why it is so,  
How can we men  
Divine it then?  
Misfortune comes  
In heaven's ways,  
Fare well or ill,  
It's man who pays.  
Neither you nor I  
Know what is gout,  
Can then the witch  
Or the doctor  
Know what it's all about?*

Chi Liang's sons still failed to understand, and asked for three doctors. One's name was Chiao, the second was called Yu and the third was called Lu. And the physician Chiao said to Chi Liang:

"You do not live properly. Your sickness comes from hunger and over-eating and sexual indulgence. Your spirit is distracted. This is not due to heaven or to the evil spirits. Although the case is serious, it can be cured." Chi Liang said, "He is a common doctor," and sent him away.

The doctor Yu said, "You are suffering from a weak constitution and you were not properly nursed at infancy. It's not a matter of days, but of years. It cannot be cured." And Chi Liang said, "He is a good doctor. Feed him."

The doctor Lu said, "Your sickness comes neither from heaven, nor from men, nor from the evil spirits. There was one who controlled it, when you were first conceived in your mother's womb, and there was one knew about it. What's the use of medicine?" Chi Liang said, "He is a divine doctor," and sent him away with costly presents.

And Chi Liang soon got well by himself.

## HONEST SHANGCH'IU KAI

Mr. Fan <sup>1</sup> had a son by the name of Tsehua, who succeeded very well in establishing his personal influence, and was very much admired by the whole kingdom. He was a good friend of the King of Chin, and although he refused office, his power was higher than that of the Three Chief Ministers. When the light of his eyes lighted upon a person, the government at once honoured him, and when he spoke ill of a person, the government at once degraded him. The scholars who congregated in his house equalled those at the court. He made his warriors fight duels of wit or of strength, even to the point of hurting each other, which he did not try to stop. Thus day and night they amused themselves so that such customs grew up in the country.

Among the "guests" of the house of the Fan family were Hosheng and Tsepo. One day the two men were walking in the countryside and stopped at the hut of a farmer by the name of Shangch'iu K'ai. During the night, Hosheng and Tsepo talked about the great power of Tsehua, and said that he could make or ruin a man and make a rich man poor and a poor man rich at his will. The farmer, Shangch'iu K'ai, had known starvation and cold and he overheard the conversation against the north wall. Therefore he borrowed some food and putting it in a basket across his shoulder, started out for the home of Tsehua.

Now the followers of Tsehua were all from well-known families. They wore white jackets and rode in carriages, walked with a leisurely pace and held their heads high. When they saw the farmer was shabby and old, a feeble fellow with a dark face, they thought him a fool, and soon began to tease and cheat him and make fun of him. They would strike and pummel him and push and pull him about and do anything they liked with him, but Shangch'iu K'ai did not show any feeling of offence. When the followers were tired of this teasing, they went up with him to a high tower and said among themselves, "Whoever can jump down from the tower shall be rewarded with a hundred pieces of silver." Many people offered to try, and Shangch'iu, innocently believing in their words, jumped down first. He flew down like a bird and alighted on the ground, without hurting himself. The followers thought it was just a stroke of luck, and were not surprised by it. Again they pointed to a deep bend of the river and said, "There is a precious

<sup>1</sup> A very powerful family of the Chin State. In the time of the Warring Kingdoms, a wealthy class had grown up, and it was the custom for many wealthy families to keep a great many scholars, swordsmen and warriors in their homes. Some had as many as three thousand such "guests" and they acquired a tremendous political influence, being sometimes able to influence the fortunes of war and the fate of kingdoms.

pearl in the water. You can dive in and get it." Shangch'iu K'ai indeed took their word for it and dived into the water and soon emerged with a real pearl. Only then did they begin to suspect there was something in the farmer, and Tsehua ordered that he be placed among those entitled to eat meat and wear silk. Soon a fire broke out, and Tsehua said, "If you can go through the fire and rescue some of the brocades, whatever you can bring out shall be yours." Shangch'iu K'ai placidly walked toward the fire and went back and forth through the flames. He came out without being scorched by the flames or blackened by the ashes.

The followers of the Fan family then believed he was a man of God and apologized to him, saying, "We did not know that you were a man of God, and have cheated you. We did not know that you were a divine saint and have abused you. Do you regard us as fools, or do you consider us blind or deaf? Please explain to us your secret doctrine."

"I have no secret doctrine," replied the farmer. "Even my mind does not know how I have done it. However, there is a point which I will tell you. When you two were stopping at my house, I heard you talking about the power of the Fan family, saying that they could make or ruin a man and make a rich man poor and a poor man rich. And I had no doubts in mind, but sincerely believed you. That was why I was willing to come such a long distance. And I thought all that you people said was sincere. I was only worried that I might not have enough faith in me and might not do all that was in my power. I was not conscious where my body was and what was good and what was bad for me. I had only this sincere mind, and matter could not go against it. Now that I know you people are cheating me, my mind is full of suspicions and I have to be constantly on the look out. When I think of how I escaped being burned or drowned in the water, I am still trembling and excited. How dare I go near the fire or water now?"

From that time on, the followers of Fan dared not abuse beggars or horse doctors they met on the way, but always came down from their carriage and bowed to them. When Tsai Wo heard the story, he told Confucius about it, and Confucius said, "Don't you know? The absolutely sincere man can influence matter, his power can move heaven and earth and influence the spirits, and he can go through the universe without meeting any obstruction, not to speak of going through fire and water and such common dangers. Shangch'iu K'ai was able to overcome matter even when he was being cheated; how much more when you and I are both sincere? Remember it, young man."



## THE MAN WHO WORRIED ABOUT HEAVEN

There was a man of the country of Ch'i who was worrying that the sky might one day fall down, and he would not know where to hide himself. This so much troubled him that he could not eat or sleep. There was another who was worried about this man's worry, and he went to explain it to him, saying, "The sky is only formed of accumulated air. There is no place where there is no air. Whenever you move or breathe, you are living right in this sky. Why do you need ever to worry that the sky will fall down?" The other man said, "If the sky were really nothing but air, would not the sun and moon and the stars fall down?" And the man who was explaining said, "But the sun, the moon and the stars are also nothing but accumulated air (gases)<sup>1</sup> which has become bright. Even if they should fall down, they would not hurt anybody." "But what if the earth should be destroyed?" And the other replied, "The earth is also only formed of accumulated solids, which fill all space. There is no place where there are no solids. As you walk and stamp on the ground, you are moving the whole day on this earth. Why do you ever need to worry that it may be destroyed?" Then that man seemed to understand and was greatly pleased, and the one who was explaining it to him also felt he understood and was greatly pleased.

When Ch'anglutse heard about it, he laughed and said, "The rainbow, the clouds and mists, the winds and rains and the four seasons—are all these not formed of accumulated air in the sky? The mountains and high peaks, the rivers and seas, metal and stone, water and fire—are these not formed of accumulated solids on the earth? Since we know they are formed of accumulated air and accumulated solids, how can we say then that they are indestructible? The infinitely great and the infinitesimally small cannot be exhaustively known or explored, or conjectured about—that is a matter taken for granted. Those who worry about the destruction of the universe are of course thinking too far ahead, but those who say they cannot be destroyed are also mistaken. Since the heaven and earth must be destroyed, they will end finally in destruction. And when they are destroyed, why shouldn't one worry about it?"

Liehtse heard about what Ch'anglutse had said, and laughed and said, "Those who say that heaven and earth are destructible are wrong, and those who say they are indestructible are also wrong. Destruction

<sup>1</sup> Ch'i in Chinese means ether, air, breath, gas and any invisible spiritual force. "Gas" would make better reading here, but the Taoist conception is that all the universe is formed of a certain spiritual force. It is an extremely useful word, bridging the difficulty between material and immaterial concepts, such as we find in the theories of light.

and indestructibility are not things we know anything about. However, they are both the same. Therefore one lives and does not know about death; one dies and does not know about life; one comes and does not know about going away; and one goes away and does not know about coming. Why should the question of destruction or non-destruction ever bother our minds?"

—LIEHTSE

## THE OLD MAN WHO WOULD MOVE MOUNTAINS

The two mountains Taihang (in Shansi) and Wangwu cover a territory of seven hundred square *li*, and are ten thousand cubits high. They were formerly situated in the south of Chichou and north of Hoyang. Old Man Fool of the North Mountain was about ninety years old and he lived in a house facing the mountain. He did not like to go up and down the mountain when he left home, and asked his family to come together and said to them, "You and I shall set to work with all our strength and level this mountain so that we may have a level path leading straight to Yünan (Honan), and reaching clear to the northern bank of the Han River (in Hupeh). What do you say?" The family agreed, but his wife said, "With your strength, you can't even do anything with the K'ueifu Hill. How can you do anything with the Taihang and Wangwu? Besides, where are you going to put away all the rocks and soil?" The various people said, "We can throw them into the end of the Puhai (Gulf of Peichili, south of Manchuria) and north of Yintu (Siberia)."

He then led three of his children and grandchildren who could carry loads, and began to chip the rocks and shovel the soil, and carried them in baskets to the end of Puhai. An orphan boy of the neighbour's widow by the name of Chingch'eng, who had just shed his milk teeth, jumped along and came to help them, and returned home only once a season.

The wise man of Hoch'ü laughed at the old man and tried to stop him, saying, "What a fool you are! With all the strength and years left to you, you can't even scratch the surface of this mountain. What can you do about the rocks and soil?" Old Man Fool of North Mountain drew a deep sigh and said, "It's only your mind that is not made up; when it is made up, nothing can stop it. You are of less use than the widow's son. When I die, there will be my children (to carry on the work), and the children will have grandchildren, and the grandchildren will again have children, and the children will again have children, and the children will again have grandchildren. So my children and

grandchildren are endless, while the mountain cannot grow bigger in size. Why shouldn't it be levelled some day?"

The wise man could not make any reply. Now the Snake Spirit heard about it and was worried about his own safety, and he went to speak to God. God had pity on the old man's sincerity of heart and ordered the two sons of K'uafu to carry the two mountains and placed one in Sutung and one in Yungnan. From then on, the south of Chichow and north of Han River became level ground.

—LIEHTSE

### CONFUCIUS AND THE CHILDREN

Confucius was travelling east and met two children arguing with one another. He asked them what they were arguing about, and one child said, "I say the sun is nearer to us in the morning and farther away from us at noon, and he says the sun is farther away from us in the morning and nearer to us at noon." One child said, "When the sun begins to come up, it is big like a carriage cover, and at noon it is like a dinner plate. So it must be farther away when it looks smaller, and nearer us when it looks bigger." The other child said, "When the sun comes up, the air is very cool, and at noon it burns like hot soup. So it must be nearer when it is hot and farther away when it is cool." Confucius could not decide who was right, and the children laughed at him and said, "Whoever said that you were a wise guy?"

—LIEHTSE

### THE MAN WHO SAW ONLY GOLD

There was a man of Ch'i who desired to have gold. He dressed up properly and went out in early morning to the market. He went straight to the gold dealer's shop and snatched the gold away and walked off. The officers arrested him and questioned him: "Why, the people were all there. Why did you rob them of gold (in broad daylight)?" And the man replied, "I only saw the gold. I didn't see any people."

—LIEHTSE

### LOOKS LIKE A THIEF

There was a man who had lost money, and thought that his neighbour's son had stolen it. He looked at him and it seemed his gait was that of a

thief, his expression was that of a thief, and all his gestures and movements were like those of a thief. Soon afterwards he found the money in a bamboo drain-pipe. Again he looked at the neighbour's son and neither his movements nor his gestures were those of a thief.

—LIHTSE

### MEASUREMENTS FOR SHOES

A certain man of Cheng was going to buy himself a new pair of shoes. First he took measurements of his feet, and left them in his seat. These he forgot to bring along when he went to the streets, and after entering a shoe shop, he said to himself, "Oh, I have forgotten to bring along the measurements, and must go back to bring them." So he did. But when he returned, the shop was closed already and he failed to buy any shoes. Someone said to him, "Why didn't you let them try the shoes on your feet?" And the man replied, "I would rather trust the measurements than trust myself."

—HANFEITSE

### KING HUAN LOST HIS HAT

King Huan of Ch'i was drunk one day and lost his hat. For three days he shut himself up for shame, without giving audience. Kuan Chung said to the King, "This is disgrace for a ruler. Why don't you make amends by some generous act?" Accordingly, the King opened the granary and distributed grains to the poor for three days. The people praised the King for his generosity, and said, "Why does not he lose his hat again?"

—HANFEITSE

### HOW THE TONGUE SURVIVED THE TEETH

Ch'ang Ch'uang was sick and Laotse went to see him. The latter said to Ch'ang Ch'uang, "You are very ill. Have you not something to say to your disciple?" "Even if you did not ask me, I was going to tell you," replied Ch'ang Ch'uang. "Do you know why one has to get down from one's carriage when coming to one's old village?" And Laotse replied, "Doesn't this custom mean that one should not forget one's origins?" "Ah, yes," said Ch'ang Ch'uang.

Then the sick man asked again, "Do you know why one should run when passing under a tall tree?" "Doesn't this custom mean we should respect what is old?" "Ah, yes," said Ch'ang Ch'uang.

Then Ch'ang Ch'uang opened his mouth wide and asked Laotse to look into it, and said, "Is my tongue still there?" "It is," replied Laotse. "Are my teeth still there?" asked the old man. "No," replied Laotse. "And do you know why?" asked Ch'ang Ch'uang. "Does not the tongue last longer because it is soft? And is it not because the teeth are hard that they fall off earlier?" replied Laotse.<sup>1</sup> "Ah, yes," said Ch'ang Ch'uang. "There you have learned all the principles concerning the world. I have nothing else to teach you."

—LIU HSIANG

### THE OWL AND THE QUAIL

An owl met a quail, and the quail asked, "Where are you going?" "I am going east," was the owl's reply. "May I ask why?" then asked the quail. "The people of the village hate my screeching noise," replied the owl. "That is why I am going east." Then said the quail, "What you should do is to change that screeching noise. If you can't, you will be hated for it even if you go east."

—LIU HSIANG

### THE TIGER AND THE FOX

King Hsüan of Ch'u asked his ministers, "I hear that the people in the north are afraid of Chao Hsisiü. Is this true?" The ministers did not make any reply, but Chiang Yi said to the King, "There was a tiger that was looking for animals for food and got hold of a fox. And the fox said, 'How dare you eat me? God of Heaven has made me the chief of the animal kingdom. If you eat me, you will be sinning against God. If you do not believe what I say, come along. I shall walk in front, and you follow behind.' The tiger went along with the fox accordingly, and the animals fled at their approach. The tiger was not aware that the animals were not afraid of the fox, but of himself. Now Your Royal Highness has a territory of five thousand square *li* and an army of a million soldiers, and you gave the entire power to Chao Hsisiü. Therefore the people of the north are afraid of his power while they are really afraid of the King's army, as the animals were afraid of the tiger."

—CHANKUOTS'EH

<sup>1</sup> Gentleness overcomes strength, typically Taoist idea.

## THE CRANE AND THE CLAM

Chao was going to invade Yen. Su Tai went to speak to King Huei of Chao on Yen's behalf. "This morning," said Su Tai, "when I was coming on my way, I was passing the Yi River. There I saw a clam sunning itself in the sun, and a crane came along to peck at its flesh, and the clam shut its shell on the crane's beak tightly. The crane said, "If it doesn't rain to-day and doesn't rain to-morrow there will be a dead clam." And the clam also said, "If you can't get out to-day and can't get out to-morrow, there will be a dead crane." Neither of the two was willing to let go, when a fisherman came up and caught them both. Now if you go and attack Yen, the two countries will be locked in battle for a long time until the people of both countries are exhausted. I am afraid the strong Ch'in will be the fisherman. You might think this over carefully." "Good," said the King, and he gave up the idea.

—CHANKUOTS'EH

## THE BLIND MAN'S IDEA OF THE SUN

There was a man born blind. He had never seen the sun and asked about it of people who could see. Someone told him, "The sun's shape is like a brass tray." The blind man struck the brass tray and heard its sound. Later when he heard the sound of a bell, he thought it was the sun. Again someone told him, "The sunlight is like that of a candle," and the blind man felt the candle, and thought that was the sun's shape. Later he felt a (big) key and thought it was a sun. The sun is quite different from a bell or a key, but the blind man cannot tell their difference because he has never seen the sun. The truth (Tao) is harder to see than the sun, and when people do not know it they are exactly like the blind man. Even if you do your best to explain by analogies and examples, it still appears like the analogy of the brass tray and the candle. From what is said of the brass tray, one imagines a bell, and from what is said about a candle, one imagines a key. In this way, one gets ever further and further away from the truth. Those who speak about Tao sometimes give it a name according to what they happen to see, or imagine what it is like without seeing it. These are mistakes in the effort to understand Tao.

—SU TUNGPO

# Family Letters of a Chinese Poet

## INTRODUCTION

THE FAMILY LETTERS of Cheng Panch'iao (A.D. 1693-1765) and the "Six Chapters of a Floating Life" serve, I think, better than anything else to show the kindly temper of the Chinese people and the typical spirit of Chinese culture at its best, though not idealized, but as it was actually lived in China. An ancient proverb, quoted in *Tienlun*, says "Do not brag about yourself; see how you write family letters." For it is in such family letters that one's true character comes out. The "Six Chapters of a Floating Life" shows how a Chinese couple took failure; these family letters show how one scholar took success. Beside the essential kindness and spirit of democratic living, all talks of the political machinery and party machines for democratic government pale into insignificance. There has been a curious emphasis on politics when we speak of democracy, as if Congressmen made a republic, an assumption which is totally unwarranted. This political emphasis was repudiated by Confucius and the Chinese nation as a whole, long ago. I have chosen Cheng Panch'iao's family letters rather than Tseng Kuofan's, because these are fewer in number. But the spirit revealed is the same in both. Tseng Kuofan's family letters could fill two thousand-page volumes, and it is interesting to note that Tseng Kuofan, the greatest general and most honoured man of his time, whose letters deeply influence Chiang Kai-shek, constantly wrote home to find out if his daughter already had learned to make shoes and advise his "mandarin" family to raise vegetables and hogs and poultry.

Cheng Panch'iao was a man distinguished equally in poetry, painting

and calligraphy, which is a rare attainment. In all three he achieved an inimitable style. He was sniffed at by the Confucian scholars, which means he was great. His ideas were strictly Confucian, but he was "unusual." As an evidence of his "unusualness," the story is recorded of how he arranged the marriage of his elder daughter. His daughter was of marriageable age and not yet engaged. He had a friend whom he greatly respected as a scholar, and the friend had a son. One day, after supper, he said to his daughter, "Come along with me. I will take you to a good place." His daughter followed him to the friend's place, when he said to her, "Now you stay here and be a good daughter-in-law." He turned round and left. He was also unusual in the sense that he was different from the Confucian Pecksniffs and could not stand over-taxation of the people. When he was magistrate in Weihsien, Shantung, there was a year of bad harvest, and he petitioned the Governor for relief of the poor, which greatly angered the official. Thereupon he asked for sick leave and returned home. His poetry is distinguished by great feeling for the poor and distressed, couched in the most homely terms, and if well translated, would give even a more vivid feeling of his great heart than these family letters. His paintings of bamboo and orchids were especially distinguished.

In his preface to his poems, he said that the book contained all he wanted published. "If after my death, someone should republish it in my name and include in it the nonsense I have written as obligations to friends or on social occasions, I shall be a ghost and strike the fellow's skull."

There are only sixteen letters altogether. I have omitted Letters III, IV, IX, XI, XII, the second postscript to XIII, and the first part of XVI, as being too difficult for the average reader to follow in his critical opinions of Chinese authors and historical personalities. The best things in the letters are those concerning treatment of servants' and poor neighbours' children. They are the last word on charity of spirit (see especially Letters XIII, XIV).



# Family Letters of a Chinese Poet

*by Cheng Panch'iao*

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

## I. TO BROTHER MO FROM T'AOKUANG TEMPLE, HANGCHOW, WRITTEN IN 1732

THERE IS NO ONE IN THE WORLD who is not a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, and Yao and Shun. But to-day some have unfortunately become slaves, slave girls, concubines and poor labourers, living in poverty and distress and unable to help themselves; it would be wrong to assume that their ancestors were slaves, slave girls, concubines and poor labourers in generations ago. Once they make up their minds and are willing to work hard, some of them become rich and honoured in their own life time, and others become so in the next generation. Is there such a thing as blood among kings, dukes, premiers and generals? <sup>1</sup> Some scions of former noble or well-known families taunt others on their birth and brag about their previous generations, saying, "Who is he, and yet he is high up? I am such and such a person, and yet I am down and out. There is no justice in heaven or in the affairs of man." Alas! they do not know that this is exactly the justice of heaven and of human affairs. Heaven rewards the good and punishes the licentious; it is in accordance with reason that he is good and therefore rewarded, and you are licentious and therefore poor. What is wrong with that? For the way of Heaven goes in a cycle. His ancestors were poor, and now it is his

Current proverb : "There is no blood in premiers and generals."

turn to be rich and honoured; your ancestors were rich and honoured, and now it is your turn to be poor. Again, what is wrong about that? This is the way of heaven and also of human affairs.

After I, your foolish brother, became a government graduate (*hsiuts'ai*), whenever I found in the old trunks at our home some deed of a slave sold into our family in the former generation, I at once burned it over the oil lamp. I did not even return it to the person concerned, for I felt if I did, it would be an obvious act and increase the man's embarrassment. Since I began to employ people, I have never required contracts. If we can get along with the servant, we keep him; and if not, we send him away. Why keep such a piece of paper to provide a pretext for our next generations to use it as a claim or a means of extortion? To act with such a heart is to have consideration for others, which is to have consideration for ourselves. If we try always to obtain a legal hold, once we get into the meshes of legality, we shall never be able to get out again. We shall only become poor more quickly and disaster will follow immediately. The posterity of such people will soon be involved in scandals and meet with unexpected disasters. You just look at the people of the world who are shrewd at calculations; do they ever succeed in overcoming others by their shrewd calculations? They are only calculating toward their own ruin. What a pity! Remember this, my younger brother.

## II. TO FOURTH BROTHER MO, WRITTEN WHILE READING AT CHIAOSHAN

The world is filled with monks. But they are not sent here from Thibet, but are fathers and brothers of China who have no home to go to or who have entered the faith. When we shave, we become monks, and when they let their hair grow again, they become ourselves. It would be a mistake to look at them with anger, call them heretics and treat them with hatred and disgust. From the time Buddha was born in the reign of Emperor Chao of Chou <sup>2</sup> until he passed away, he never set foot on Chinese soil. Eight hundred years later, Emperor Han Mingti <sup>3</sup> brought on all this trouble through his wild fancies and dreams. Buddha himself had nothing to do with it. Now instead of blaming Emperor Han Mingti, we are all blaming Buddha, who is perfectly innocent. Besides, since Ts'angli (Han Yü) exposed the Buddhist doctrines,

<sup>2</sup> 1052-1002 B.C. The chronology is bad.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 58-75, when the first Buddhist monk reached China.

Confucianism has come back into its own, and the Buddhist religion is gradually on the wane. The rulers have followed the Six Classics and Four Books as the means of regulating family life and governing the empire. To denounce Buddhism at this late hour would be as meaningless as chewing candle-wax. The monks are sinners against Buddha. They rob and kill and seek after women and are greedy and snobbish, for they have not followed the doctrines of purifying their hearts and seeking their original nature. The government graduates are also sinners against Confucius, for they are neither kind nor wise, and devoid of courtesy or justice. They are no longer concerned with the keeping of the ancient tradition and of Confucian teachings. The government graduates love to abuse the monks and the monks love to abuse the government graduates. The proverb says, "Let each one sweep off the snow at his door-step, and not interfere with the frost on the neighbour's roof." What do you think of this? The idea has just occurred to me, and I am putting it down and sending it for you to read. I have also shown this to Monk Wufang and it gave him a good laugh.

#### V. TO BROTHER MO, WRITTEN AT SHUANGFENGKO, CHIAOSHAN

There is a cemetery lot at Hockiachuang, which costs twelve ounces of silver. Father once wanted to buy it, but on account of a grave without an owner there, which had to be removed, he said, "Alas! How can one dig up another person's grave to make room for one's own?" Father therefore never did buy the lot. But if we don't buy it, someone else will, and that ownerless grave will be dug up. I am thinking of writing to cousin Ho to find out what has happened to it. If it's not yet sold, I shall send him twelve ounces of silver and buy it for burial ground for myself and my wife. We shall leave that grave untouched as a place for buffaloes to lie down, and set up an inscription in stone asking our posterity never to disturb that grave. Would this not be in accordance with our deceased father's kindly thought and an improvement upon it? We shouldn't believe in geomancers. If we always try to retain generosity and eschew meanness of heart, even an unlucky grave will turn into good ground. There can be no doubt about this point. When our posterity visit our graves on the annual *ch'ingming* festival, they shall also offer sacrifices to that grave, with one chicken, a cup of wine, a bowl of rice and a hundred packs (of hundred) of paper money. Let this be an established rule. June 10, 1734.

## VI. TO BROTHER MO, WRITTEN ON A BOAT AT HUAIAN

If one loves other people, he himself becomes worthy of love; if one hates other people, he himself deserves hatred. The best point about (Su) Tungp'o is that he felt all his life that there was no bad man in this world. I, your foolish elder brother, have all my life criticized people without mincing words, but whenever someone has one good point or special ability, or said one good word or done one good deed, I have never failed to praise it with all my heart. It is because I love people that whenever I have several thousand dollars, I must use it all. And when I am in need of help, other people have often helped me. I always love criticizing people, particularly the government graduates. But, come to think about it, the trouble with the graduates is that they are so bound up with themselves. On the other hand, if they were not so bound up with themselves, they wouldn't be graduates. But I think it is unfair to criticize the graduates alone—who nowadays are not bound up with themselves? I am an old man now and living alone. I must watch out for this habit of mine. It is good to love people, and a bad habit to criticize people. Su Tungp'o suffered on account of this habit.<sup>4</sup> And certainly a person like myself should be more careful than he. You must also often remind me of this point, old brother.

VII. TO BROTHER MO, FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S  
RESIDENCE AT FANHSIEN

The family cemetery at Ch'ayüansze belongs in common to the East Gate branch of our clan. Because there was no other place, I buried our parents there, and thanks to its power, I have become a *chinshih*.<sup>5</sup> For several years now I have occupied an official post without any mishap, which means that I have robbed the clan of its luck and monopolized it all myself. Can my heart feel at ease? It is pitiful to see our relatives at East Gate catch fish and shrimps, working on their boats and repairing nets, living in huts and eating chaffs and wheat gruel. They pick floating heart, radish and water-bamboo and boil them and if they have buck-wheat cakes to go along with them, they consider them delicacies and the young children fight for them. Whenever I think of them, tears fill my eyes. When you bring money from my salary home, you should

<sup>4</sup> He was exiled to a southern district because he could not help making fun of Wang Anshih who was in power.

<sup>5</sup> One who passed successfully the national examinations, equivalent to a doctor's degree, but much more highly honoured.

distribute it from house to house. Although the six families at the South Gate, the eighteen families at Chuhuengchiang and the lone family at Hsiat'ien are more distant relatives, they are of the same blood, and should be given something also. Where is young granduncle Ch'ilin? Such an orphan without parents to depend upon is often bullied by the people of the village. You should find out where he is and comfort him. All relatives in the four generations counting from our great-grandfather should be given each two dollars, and it will be easier later for us to get along with them. Hsü Tsungyü and Lu Poyi are my college friends, and we used to go about daily together. I still remember discussing ancient literatures with them in an old temple deep into the night with the falling leaves flying about. Sometimes we sat on the stone lions and discussed ancient warfare and all topics in the universe. They have been unfortunate, and must also be given a share of my money for old friendship's sake. People usually think a great deal of their own writings and scholarship and believe that getting degrees is an easy matter for them, but do not realize it is all due to luck. Suppose I should happen to be still unsuccessful in the examinations, to whom could I complain? This is therefore not something to make one conceited toward friends. The principal thing is to cement goodwill among relatives and members of the clan and remember old friends; for the rest, you can do what you think fit in the way of helping the neighbours and people of the village. Spend it all; I shall spare the details.

#### VIII. SECOND LETTER TO BROTHER MO, FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S RESIDENCE AT FANHSIEN

The house you bought is well enclosed and indeed suitable for residence, except that I feel the courtyard is too small, and when you look at the sky, it is not big enough. With my unfettered nature, I do not like it. Only a hundred steps north from this house there is the Parrot Bridge, and another thirty steps from the Bridge is the Plum Tower, with vacant spaces all around. When I was drinking in this tower in my young days I used to look out and see the willow banks and the little wooden bridge with decrepit huts and wild flowers against a background of old city walls, and was quite fascinated by it. If you could get fifty thousand cash, you could buy a big lot for me to build a cottage there for my old days. My plan is to build an earthen house with courtyard, and plant bamboos and flowers and trees around. There will be a pebble walk leading from the gate to the house door. There will be two rooms, one for the parlour, and the other for study, where I can keep books, paintings,

brushes, ink-slabs, wine-kettle and tea service, and where I can discuss literature and write poetry with some good friends and the younger generation. Behind this will be the family living rooms, with three main rooms, two kitchens and one room for servants. Altogether there will be eight rooms, all covered with a hay-thatch, and I shall be quite content. Early in the morning before sunrise, I shall be able to see the red glow of morning clouds over the Eastern Sea,<sup>6</sup> and at sunset, the sun will shine from behind the trees. When one stands upon a high place in the courtyard, one can already see the haze and water and the bridge in the distance, and when giving a party at night, people outside will be able to see our lights across the wall. It will be only thirty steps to your house on the south, and will be separated from the little garden only by a small creek. So it is quite ideal.

Some may say, "It will be indeed comfortable, but there may be thieves." They do not know that thieves are but poor people. I would open the door and invite them to come in, and discuss with them what they would like to share with me. They can take away whatever they like, and if really nothing will suit them, they can take away the great Wang Hsienchi's antique carpet and pawn it for a hundred cash to meet their immediate needs. Please, my younger brother, bear this in mind, for this is your stupid brother's provision for spending a happy old age. I wonder whether I can have what I so desire.

#### X. FOURTH LETTER TO BROTHER MO, FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S RESIDENCE, AT FANHSIEN

I received a letter from home on the twenty-sixth of the tenth month, and was delighted to learn that we got twenty-five hundred bushels from the new fields at the autumn harvest. From now on I can afford to be a farmer during the remainder of my days. We must have all sorts of things made—mortars, grinding-stones, sieves, bamboo pans, big and small brooms and rice measures of all kinds. The women of the family shall lead the maids in housework and all learn to pound rice, shake grains and work with their hands and feet. It will give an atmosphere of living on land and bringing up children there. On a cold, icy day, when poor relatives come to our door, first give them a big bowl of (boiled) toasted rice, which, helped out with a small dish of pickled ginger, is the best means of warming up the aged and the poor. In our leisure days we can eat cakes of broken rice and cook "muddle congee," and eat it sinking our head into the bowl held between the hands. On a

<sup>6</sup> Cheng's native place is Hinhua, in Eastern Fukien, near the coast.

frosty or snowy morning, this makes the whole body warm. Alas! I hope to be a farmer until the end of my days!

I think the best class of people in the world are the farmers. Scholars should be considered the last of the four classes.<sup>7</sup> The most well-to-do farmers have a hundred *mu* (about sixteen acres), the second seventy of eighty *mu*, and the next fifty or sixty *mu*. They all toil and labour to feed the rest of the world. Were it not for the farmers, we should all starve. We scholars are considered one class higher than the farmers because we are supposed to be good sons at home and courteous abroad, and maintain the ancient tradition of culture; in case of success, we can serve and benefit the people, and in case of failure, we can cultivate our personal lives as an example to the world. But this is no longer true. As soon as a person takes a book in hand, he is thinking of how to pass the examinations and become a *chüjen* or *chinshih*, how to become an official and get rich and build fine houses and buy large property. It is all wrong from the very start, and the further one goes, the more wicked one becomes. It will all come to a bad end. Those who are not successful at the examinations are still worse; they prey upon the people of the village, with a small head and thievish eyes. True, there are many who hold firm to their principles, and there are everywhere some who set the highest standards for themselves. But the good suffer on account of the bad, with the result that we have to shut up. The moment we open our mouths, people will say, "All you scholars know how to talk. As soon as you become officials, you will not be saying the same things." That is why we have to keep quiet and accept the insults.

The artisans make tools and turn them to good use, while the business men make possible the exchange of goods. They are all of some use to the people, while the scholars alone are a great nuisance to them. One should not be surprised to find them considered the lowest of the four classes of people, and I doubt that they are entitled to even that.

I have always thought the most of the farmers. The new tenants should be treated with courtesy. They should call us "hosts" and we should call them "guests." The host-and-guest relationship is reciprocal. What reason is there to suppose that we are higher than they? We must be courteous to them and love them. If they ask for help, help them, and if they cannot repay, make it easy for them. It has seemed ludicrous to me that all the T'ang poets who wrote poems about the Cowherd and the Spinning Maid described only the parting of the lovers and lost sight of the original meaning of their names. For the Spinning Maid

<sup>7</sup> Cheng here reverses the traditional Chinese classification which is in the following order: scholars, farmers, artisans and business men.

reminds us where our dress comes from, and the Cowherd reminds us where our food comes from; therefore they are the most honoured among the stars of Heaven. If Heaven thinks a great deal of them, shall man look down upon them? The hard-working farmers who toil to give us the essentials of living may be said to have followed the example of these stars.

The women of our town cannot weave coarse silk or cotton, but they can still cook and sew and do their part nobly. Recently many listen to the drum-stories or play at cards. The manners are becoming loose and should be corrected.

Although we have three hundred *mu* of land, they are mortgaged property and cannot be depended upon. Hereafter we should buy two hundred *mu*, so that we brothers shall have each one hundred *mu*, which is in accordance with the ancient teaching that each farmer was to receive a hundred *mu*. More than that will be robbery of other people's property and a crime. There are many people in this world who have no land, and who are we that we should be so greedy? Where shall the poor ones be forced to go? It may be argued that there are plenty of people whose lands stretch for miles in thousands of *mu*, and what can we do about it? The reply is, "Let others attend to their affairs, while we attend to ours. When good customs prevail, unite around the King in harmony. When the customs degenerate, abstain from walking in evil company." Let this be the family tradition of Panch'iao.

### XIII. SECOND LETTER TO BROTHER MO FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S RESIDENCE AT WEIHSIEN

My only son was born to me in my fifty-second year. Of course, I love him, but there is a correct way of loving one's children. Even in games, he should be taught to show the heart of mercy and generosity, and avoid cruelty. What I hate most is to have caged birds; we enjoy them while they are shut up in prison. What justification is there that we are entitled to thwart the instincts of animals to please our own nature? As for tying up a dragon-fly by the hair or tying a crab with a piece of string, it affords the children some fun only for a little while, and soon the little thing is dead. Now nature creates all things and nourishes them all. Even an ant or an insect comes from the combination of forces of the *yin* and *yang* and the five elements. God also loves them dearly in his heart, and we who are supposed to be the crown of all creation cannot even sympathize with God's heart. How then is the animal world going to have a place of refuge? Snakes and centipedes, tigers, leopards and wolves are most dangerous animals. But since Heaven has given birth



to them, what right have we to take their lives? If they were all meant to be killed, then why in the first place did Heaven give them life? All we can do is to drive them far away so that they shall not harm us. What wrong has the spider committed by spinning its web? Some kill them without mercy on the fairy-tale that they curse the moon or that they may make the walls crumble down. On what authority is such a statement based, by which we kill animals' lives? Will this do? Will this do? As I am away from home, you should watch over my son. Develop his heart of kindness and stop his cruelties. Don't spare him because he is your nephew, and not your son. The children of our servants are also a part of human kind. We should be equally kind to them and should not permit our children to bully them. When there are fish or eatables, we must also share them with their children and see them happy and jump about. If our own children are eating and let the servants' children stand far away looking on, their parents will see it and, while pitying them and being unable to help them, will shout to them to go away. Is this not heart-rending for the parents? Now to be a scholar and be a college graduate or a doctor is a small thing; the important thing is to be reasonable and be a good man. Read this to sister-in-law Kuo and sister-in-law Jao and let them know that there is a proper and an improper way of loving their children.

*Postscript.* Regarding what I have just said about not keeping birds in cages; I must say that I always love birds, but that there is a proper way of doing it. One who loves birds should plant trees, so that the house shall be surrounded with hundreds of shady branches and be a country and a home for birds. Thus, at dawn, when we wake up from sleep and are still tossing about in bed, we hear a chorus of chirping voices like a celestial harmony. And when we get up and are putting on our gowns or washing our faces or gargling our mouths or sipping the morning tea, we see their gorgeous plumes flitting about. Before we have time to look at one, we are attracted by another. This is a pleasure that far exceeds that of keeping one bird in a cage. Generally the enjoyment of life should come from a view regarding the universe as a park, and the rivers and streams as a pond, so that all beings can live in accordance with their nature. Great indeed is such happiness! How shall the keeping of a bird in a cage or a fish in a jar be compared with it in generosity of spirit and in kindness?

#### XIV. THIRD LETTER TO BROTHER MO FROM WEIHSIEN

The wealthy families usually do their best to secure the best teacher for their children, but the successful scholars usually come from the poor

children who are invited to study at their schools, and not from their own children. In a few years, the wealthy families go down; some depend upon others for a living; some become beggars, and some are barely able to carry on without fear of want, but are illiterate. Sometimes one out of a hundred such rich children will become a successful scholar, but his writings will lack depth and true feelings, the title to immortality. Is it not true therefore that wealth can make a man stupid and poverty can strengthen a man's ambition and enlighten his mind?

Although I am a humble official, my son may be already considered heir of an official family. I do not know whether he will make good or fail, but if the children who are studying with him in our home can become successful, I shall be quite happy and contented. We should be most careful in regard to his relationships with his teacher and schoolmates. My son is only six and is the youngest at school. The eldest among his schoolmates should be addressed as *hsiensheng*, and the next eldest should be addressed as "elder brothers." He should not be permitted to call them directly by their names. We have plenty of writing brush and ink and paper at our home and should distribute them to the school children. I have often observed how a son of a poor widow tried for ten days to get money for buying writing paper to make a writing pad and failed. We should keep an eye on such a boy and give it to him unintentionally. And when it rains, and a poor boy is not able to go home, we should ask him to stay for supper, and at dusk send him home with an old pair of shoes. His parents love him, and though they may not be able to make good clothes for him, they generally provide a good pair of shoes and socks for him to come to school. Once that pair gets wet with mud, it will be difficult for them to get another pair.

It is difficult to get a good teacher, but it is more important to respect him. One should be careful in selecting a teacher for the school, but once he is chosen, he must be treated with due respect and not found fault with. Once in officialdom, it is impossible for us to stay at home to coach the children. The teacher one invites is usually just a better scholar of the village, but by no means a famous writer. It is easy to laugh secretly at his mistakes or openly point out his errors. The teacher will become ill at ease and will not be able to devote his mind to teaching, while the pupils will lose respect for him and not work hard at their lessons. This would be a matter of regret. It would be far better to make use of what the teacher excels in and make the pupils profit by it. If he is really not qualified, we should wait till the next year and employ another teacher, but meanwhile there should be no decrease in our courtesy toward him.

## XV. FOURTH LETTER TO BROTHER MO FROM WEIHSIEN

When a man goes to school, he cannot be certain that he will become an official. But whether he becomes an official or not, he should not forget the true object of study. If one fails in the examinations, the knowledge gained still remains his own and it should not be regarded as a losing investment. I, for instance, have become successful and am reputed to have a good knowledge of books. But when I ask myself, I cannot say how many books I have really absorbed into my heart. All we do usually is to borrow from one book and adapt from others, thus gaining a reputation by cheating. The scholars owe a debt to the books, while the books owe nothing to them.

Formerly someone asked Shen Chinsze what to do to avoid poverty, and his reply was to read books. The man thought Shen's advice was impractical, but it is practical. A man loses his character by rushing about and attending to worthless affairs and in the end gains nothing. It would be better for him to wander about in the land of books and history, without any object of seeking benefit, but suddenly coming upon some truth before his very eyes. Who believes in this advice will become successful and who does not will remain poor. It all depends on whether one has the wit to realize it and whether he has persistence.

## XVI. FIFTH LETTER TO BROTHER MO FROM THE MAGISTRATE'S RESIDENCE AT WEIHSIEN

Calligraphy and painting are considered fine arts, but are also vulgar occupations. Is it not a vulgar thing for a man who cannot do some service to the country and improve the life of the people to occupy himself with pen and ink for the amusement of other people? It was harmless for Su Tungp'o who took the entire universe into his heart to paint a tree or a rock with a dry brush. But Wang Mochieh (Wang Wei) and Chao Tse-ang (Mengfu) were merely two painters in the times of T'ang and Sung. If you examine their poetry and prose, you will not find a single line that has to do with the welfare of the people. Place these two persons among Fang (Hsüanling), Tu (Juhwei), Yao (Ts'ung) and Sung (Ching), and among Han (Ch'i), Fan (Chungyen), Fu (Pi) and Ouyang (Hsiu),<sup>8</sup> and where will they be? The talents of

<sup>8</sup> The first four are famous, good ministers of T'ang and the last four are famous ministers of Sung.

*protégés* of officials' homes and the skills of friends of leisure are good only for trimming flowers, building pavilions and terraces, and examining curios and tasting tea. They are worthy to give orders to the doormen and butlers, but what are they? Your stupid brother had no profession in youth, achieved nothing in middle age and lives in poverty in old age. I have therefore been forced to earn a living by my writing brush, but in reality it may be regarded a shame and a disgrace. I hope you will have some higher ambition and not fall into my footsteps. The ancient people said of Chuko Liang that he was "indeed a famous scholar," which means that the term "famous scholar" could be applied worthily only to him. Now the city is full of painters and writers of calligraphy who are called "famous scholars." Would this not make Cho Liang's cheeks burn and turn the high-minded ones' teeth cold (make them sneer)?

# The Epigrams of Lusin

## INTRODUCTION

IT IS DIFFICULT to discuss or evaluate a contemporary writer who died only in 1936. But it is still more difficult to talk of God, and Lusin is God to the leftist writers of China to-day. Whether he will be pleased with that position or not, if his spirit is conscious, is not such a simple question to one who is acquainted with the highly complicated involutions of Lusin's ideas. Anyway, in one of his epigrams he says, "By the time a great man becomes fossilized and is worshipped as great, he is already a puppet." I suppose it is quite harmless to discuss a Chinese god in the English language which he does not understand. The reason for including a short selection from Lusin in this anthology of the wisdom of China is obvious: he is one of the most biting satirists of Chinese culture, and even such a short selection will show the mood and temper of modern China, especially that of young China in regard to its ancient culture. Behind some of his short epigrams one gets a glimpse of the gigantic spiritual and mental turmoil of a China in revolt against the past. Lusin represents the Literature of Revolt. But this is in itself a sign of life.

In the following selection, I have drawn less from his direct views on proletarian literature and class warfare, which are quite familiar to Western students of the ideas of Soviet Russia, and have concentrated more upon his epigrams on life as epigrams. It must not be forgotten also that the charm he has cast upon his readers is due to his style and his bitter sarcasm and occasional wit, while as a leader of the theory of proletarian literature, his views of ancient Chinese culture, his continual cry of revolt and his strictly Marxian view of the function of literature are eagerly and uncritically accepted as the Bible. That his views of China's culture seem shallow and unsound, especially after the five

years of war which have opened the eyes of the leftists themselves to the inner strength of China's ancient ideals, and that a radical young China is willing to take Lusin's word for it when he discourages them from touching ancient books by calling them poison, must be taken as necessary phases of the age of revolt. Behind it one sees a heartrending spirit of repentance and, best of all, an unquestionable zeal for reform. After all, China was a little too placid and lethargic in accepting the modern world. For that reason he directed his full venom at those who would preserve China's national heritage, because, as seen in actual circumstances, it is these people who stand in the way of reform. But the war and the migration inland are teaching young China about ancient China in a way that "critics" and "satirists" cannot. For the strength of China's sound peasantry is indisputably the strength of Confucian morals.

Lusin is a warrior more than a "literary man." It always seems to me that he was happiest when he saw or imagined his face bruised and groggy. And it is his uncompromising, challenging, fighting spirit that so charms his readers, for the public always loves a good fighter. When teaching in the Amoy University, he once saw a pig rubbing its back against a tree associated with love and romance, and he could not help stooping down to fight the pig. A friend asked him why he did so, and he would not explain. The following is both characteristic of his style and his spirit:

"I am sometimes aware that I am wicked. For instance, I stop drinking and take cod-liver oil to lengthen my life, not entirely for the sake of those who love me, but principally because of those who are my enemies—so that some regret may remain in their too perfect world. . . . I still mean to live in this society, for a reason that I have often announced, and that is, purposely to make the so-called gentlemen uncomfortable for a few more days. So I still purposely leave a few pieces of armour on my body and stand erect to give them some regret in their world, until I am wearied and tired, and then I will go away."

This is typical of his style:

"There are two kinds of difficult crises in a man's life. One is when you come to a cross-road. According to Motse, one ought to weep and turn back. But I would neither weep nor turn back, but would first sit down at the cross-road for a little rest or a little nap, and then choose a relatively better road to travel. If I come across a fool, perhaps I will rob him of his food to stop my hunger, but will not ask him for the way, because I know he cannot tell me. If I should meet a tiger, I would climb up a tree, and come down only after he could not stand his hunger and had gone away. If he didn't go away, I would rather die of hunger on the

top of the tree, and moreover tie myself to a bough so that he shall not have the pleasure of eating even my dead body. But if there is no tree, what then? I will offer myself to him and invite him to eat me, but must bite a morsel off him first. The second kind of crisis is when you come to an extremity. It is said that Yüan Tsi also wept and turned back on his way, as Motse advised on coming to a cross-road. One must still go on and make one's way by cutting through the brambles and undergrowths. But I have never yet come to a place where there is no road, but all brambles. I do not know whether there is such a thing as an extremity, or merely that I have not come across one."

"Lusin" is his pen name, his real name being Chou Shujen. It is because he is more a warrior than a "literary man" that in reading his writings, one continually smells blood, gunpowder, and sweat and tears. As was said of Heinrich Heine, his coffin should be laid, not with a pen, but with a sword. The structure of his ideas is fairly simple: all that belongs to China's ancient culture is putrid and poisonous, and all that Lunacharsky says about literature is perfect. He advises China's young men to "read few, or absolutely no, Chinese books, but read foreign books"; he compared Chinese ancient books to "poison" or "arsenic" and says the reading of them makes him sleepy; he says "although there is a strain of teaching in ancient books for taking up responsibility toward society, but mostly it is the optimism of corpses; while although there is a strain of cynicism and decadence in foreign books, it is the cynicism and decadence of living men." He advocated the abolition of Chinese writing, believes in the "Europeanization of Chinese syntax" and is for imitation of foreign grammar. He urges the young men to worship Darwin and Ibsen rather than Confucius and Kuan Yü, and sacrifice to Apollo rather than to the God of Pestilence. These ideas are incredibly naïve and hardly show a sense of discernment either of the East or of the West. They are taken very seriously, and it is a true fact that "leftist professors" advise China's young men not to read Chinese ancient works, though they themselves read them on the sly to improve their style, like pharmacists who are qualified to handle arsenic. This self-deception is going on to-day. But China needed a man like Lusin to wake the millions up from the self-complacency and lethargy and accumulated inertia of four thousand years. Perhaps China needs still more Lusins. But the young China that listens to Lusin and accepts his ideas is a China no longer self-complacent, but humble and anxious to learn from the West, and humility is the beginning of wisdom.

# The Epigrams of Lusin

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

1 Those who were officials in former regimes wish to restore the ancient culture; those who are officials now wish to maintain the *status quo*; and those who are not yet officials cry for reform.

2 When you talk with famous scholars, the best thing is to pretend that occasionally you do not quite understand them. If you understand too little, you will be despised; if you understand too much, you will be disliked; if you just fail occasionally to understand them, you will suit each other very well.

3 Do not guard yourself against those who call themselves thieves, for when you find out the opposite, they turn out to be gentlemen. Guard yourself against those who call themselves gentlemen, for when you discover the opposite, they turn out to be thieves.

4 The man who is hated by the man you hate is a good person.

5 Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, and he had to go through Gethsemane. Now the rich men of the West are worshipping Jesus, and it is the poor who are going through Gethsemane.

6 The bourgeoisie love to hear scandals, particularly scandals about persons they know.

7 In the war between the so-called celestial spirits and the devils, both are fighting not for the control of heaven, but for the control of hell. Therefore irrespective of who wins, hell still remains hell.

8 I think it is difficult to say whether there is such a thing as hope or not. Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence.

9 The so-called "peace" is an interval between wars.



10 One who knows many subjects is liable to be shallow; one who knows only one subject is apt to be perverse.

11 A woman has a maternal instinct and a childish instinct, but not the instinct of a wife. Her wife-instinct is a combination of her maternal and childish instincts.

12 A bee gives a sting and loses its life; a satirist gives a sting and preserves his.

13 I used to think that a man was sentenced to death or imprisonment because he was guilty; now I know that he is found guilty because he is disliked.

14 I have hated too many things in this society and ought to be hated by others myself. This gives me a feeling of living in a human world.

15 There was a ruffian in Tientsin during the Boxer trouble who always demanded two dollars for carrying a person's luggage. Even if the luggage was very light, he said he wanted two dollars. Even if the distance was very small, he still wanted two dollars. Even if the person didn't want him to carry the luggage at all, he still wanted two dollars. The ruffian's conduct was execrable, but his insistent spirit was admirable. The same may be applied to demanding women's rights. If one says to you, "This is outmoded," your answer is "I want women's rights." If one says to you, "This is unworthy of you," your answer still is, "I want women's rights." If one says to you, "Don't be so anxious. Everything will be well when the economic system is changed," your answer still should be, "I want women's rights."

16 Chinese people love compromise. If you say to them, "This room is too dark, we must have a window made," they will all oppose you. But if you say, "Let's take off the roof," they will compromise with you and say "Let's have a window."

17 The Chinese people worship the malign spirits, like the God of Pestilence and the God of Fire, and bully the honest gods, like the God of the Earth and the God of the Kitchen. They do the same with their emperors.

18 China is like a room with invisible walls. You are liable to knock your head against something. The man who is willing to fight these walls and bump his head without minding pain wins.

19 I often think that we ought to apply the new law to the new and the old law to the old. When old officials of the Manchu Dynasty commit a crime, we ought to flog their bottoms.

20 The Chinese culture is the culture of serving one's masters, achieved at the cost of the misery of multitudes. Those who praise Chinese culture, whether they be Chinese or foreigners, assume that they belong to the ruling class.

21 People hate Buddhist monks and nuns, Mohammedans and Christians, but no one hates a Taoist. To understand the reason for this is to understand half of China.

22 There is a favourite way with those who know old literature. When a new idea is introduced, they call it "heresy" and must bend all their efforts to destroy it. When that new idea, after hard struggle, has won a place for itself, they then discover that "it's same thing as what was taught by Confucius." They object to all imported things, saying that this is "to convert Chinese into barbarians," but when the barbarians become rulers of China, they discover these "barbarians" are also descendants of the Yellow Emperor.

23 The Chinese have only two names for foreign races: one is "foreign races," the other is "Your Majesty."

24 When the Chinese are in power, and see that others cannot do anything to them . . . they are autocrats and have no use for moderation; when they begin to talk of "moderation," they know they have to be moderate; and when they are out of luck, then they begin to speak of "fate." They would be contented even with being slaves and find themselves in perfect harmony with the universe.

25 Who says that the Chinese do not change? When new things are introduced, they want to reject them, but when they begin to see that there is something in them, they begin to change. But they do not change by adapting themselves to the new things, but by adapting the new things to themselves.

26 Buddhism was once fought against in China. But when the (Sung) philosophers of reason began to talk of contemplation and monks learned to write poetry, then the time was ripe for the discovery that "the three religions come from the same source."

27 A friend of mine has said, "The question is not whether we can preserve our national heritage, but whether the national heritage can preserve us." To preserve ourselves is the first thing. The question is whether it has or has not the power to preserve us, and not whether it is "national heritage."

28 I think our immediate needs at present are the three things: first, self-preservation, second, food and clothing, and third, development. Anything which stands in the way of these three things ought to be ruthlessly trampled down—be it man or ghost, or the Three Scripts and Five Canons, or the "Hundred Sung" or "Thousand Yüan" editions,<sup>1</sup> be it the astrolabe or the Divination Chart,<sup>2</sup> the golden statue or jade Buddha, or family secrets for medicines or pills made by secret processes.

<sup>1</sup> Names of two famous collections of rare editions.

<sup>2</sup> Both mentioned in the *Book of History*.

29 Rather than worship Confucius and Kuan Kung, one should worship Darwin and Ibsen. Rather than Sacrifice to the God of Pestilence and the Five Classes of Spirits, one should worship Apollo.<sup>3</sup>

30 The greatest and most enduring art of China is that of men acting the rôle of women on the stage. . . . The best part about men acting as women is that the men in the audience see the men are acting as women, and the women in the audience see that the women are being acted by men.

31 Both talking and writing are the signs of those who have failed. Those who are engaged in fighting the evil forces have no times for these, and those who are successful keep quiet.

32 We have hereafter only two roads to choose: one is to embrace the ancient literature and die, the other is to forsake the ancient literature and live.

33 Immaturity need not be ashamed before maturity just as a child need not be ashamed before an old man. This is true of writing; a young writer need not be ashamed of his immaturity, for if his personality is not thwarted, he will grow and mature in time, while there is no hope for senility and decay.

34 The great judge of man's soul is at the same time its defendant. The judge on his bench enumerates the crimes the soul has committed while the defendant tries his best to paint a picture of its good points. The judge exposes the dirt in his soul, while the defendant reveals the beauty among its dirt. In this way, the depths of the human soul can be revealed.

35 The literature of former days is like watching a fire from across the water; in present-day literature, the author himself is being scorched by the fire and he is bound to feel it deeply, and when he begins to feel it deeply, he is bound to take part in the social struggle.

<sup>3</sup> This has justified the witticism that the American bug is better than the Chinese bug and the American moon is better than the Chinese moon. Lusin knew principally Japanese and some German, besides Chinese.

# One Hundred Proverbs

## INTRODUCTION

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF PROVERBS is taken from a cheap edition of a "popular" book of games, riddles, jokes, verse oddities and anecdotes, by an anonymous author so undistinguished that its signatures are at once disarming. It is called "A Night's Talk," written by "Mr. Tut-Tut!" and revised by "Mr. Pfui-Pfui!" From internal evidence, it appears to have been written in the seventeenth century.

A word about the moral elevation of this Mr. Tut-Tut is therefore necessary. Mr. Tut-Tut merely inherited a tradition of folk and literary wisdom and, like Benjamin Franklin, wrote some extremely good proverbs himself. Back of these proverbs are all the subtlety and depth of Laotse, the commonsense of Confucius, the practical shrewdness of Han Fei, the hard cynicism of Yang Chu, the super-mundane breadth of a Buddhist monk and the tender sensualism of a Chinese poet, blended together in spirit so that they represent China's wisdom of the ages. They seem to let us look at life through the window of a Chinese scholar's hut. For the Chinese literature of the earliest times started out with an amazing fondness for moralizations (witness *Tsochüan* and *Chankouts'eh*), and through the centuries, every scholar was content to note down a moral truth, or give it a new expression, no matter how often that truth had been observed before. In one sense, Chinese literature is strewn with proverbs and moral maxims. Then, especially beginning with the Sung Dynasty, quite a few writers began consciously to write books of maxims and observations on human nature and human life. Deepened by the Buddhist outlook and refined by T'ang poetry, these maxims soon assumed a special form and delicacy of expression, with all the subtleties of poetic diction. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the so-called *hsiaop'in*, or casual essays, reached special

perfection, we see a sudden growth of such books of maxims, by Ch'en Chiju, T'u Lung, Chang Ch'ao, etc. I have already translated "The Epigrams of Chang Ch'ao" (about half of the original book) in *The Importance of Living*, while the present ones are more in the nature of proverbs.

These hundred proverbs I have selected are distinctly of a popular type and many are culled from sources which I can recognize. But they are popular also in another special sense. They represent the average content of couplet scrolls that are invariably seen in Chinese households, similar to the custom half a century ago when American homes used to hang biblical maxims in the parlour or bedroom. In other words, they are sayings which the Chinese call good, and to which their hearts give an instinctive assent. Some of these are seen in couplet scrolls and almost all of them can be used for such purposes. Almost all of them are put in the form of literary couplets, a form developed to the last degree of nicety in the "T'ang poems," where in a verse of eight lines, the middle four lines must perforce be in the form of two couplets. And good lines of poetry should be popular because every perfect line should have a melody and inevitableness of expression besides the thought, like a proverb.

It is therefore singular, but not unintelligible that proverbs of such moral elevation should be found in a cheap book of games, riddles and jokes. One should be surprised nowadays to find such proverbs in the *New York World-Telegram's* "Year Book," but one need not be surprised at all to find them in "Poor Richard's Almanac." This is the difference between the past world and the present one, between the world of simple wisdom and the world of well-verified, well-tabulated and well-indexed Infallible Sacred Facts. These facts are our god to-day. They are almost all we have.

There is often a touch of cynicism in these maxims, but that can hardly be a fault. An idealist who has outgrown his idealism is a danger to society, but a cynic who has outgrown his cynicism is one of the kindest persons on earth. After reading these, one can enjoy the games and jokes and riddles better.

# One Hundred Proverbs

*by Mr. Tut-Tut*

*Translated by Lin Yutang*

1 Men and women who know each other easily are cheap lovers; persons who easily make friends are not lifelong friends.

2 To have a peace of mind not quite perfect is to deepen the awareness of peace; to enjoy pleasure not quite to the limit is to prolong the flavour of those pleasures.

3 The silkworm weaves its cocoon and stays inside, therefore it is imprisoned; the spider weaves its web and stays outside, therefore it is free.

4 An intelligent person often talks with his eyes; a shallow man often swallows with his ears.

5 Endure a small insult and be safe from a big insult; suffer some small loss and be safe from a big loss. Where you miss an advantage in a deal, you gain an advantage.

6 There are heroes with hearts of steel and beards of frost, and beauties with faces like a flower, breathing fragrance with their smiles—the same human skull, yet what different acts of farce!

7 Personal talent coupled with a slow temper becomes great talent; wisdom coupled with a pacifist mind becomes true wisdom.

8 It would be indeed an ideal world if warriors did not have the air of the army, scholars did not have the air of bookish dogmatism, mountain recluses did not have the smell of mists and clouds and monks did not smell of incense and the altar.

9 Do not open your heart to the grim silent one; guard your tongue before the garrulous fool.

10 Talk not of your personal success to one who has failed; forget not your failures in your moment of success.

11 Avoid the mean person, but do not make him your personal enemy; get close to the gentleman, but do not always say "Yes" to him.

12 Who cannot be of use to society and therefore wears the mask of cynics is afraid to meet the true hero; who is not fit to sit on top but insists on sitting on top is safe among his futile friends.

13 Who makes his mind the slave of his body is like a plodding horse or cattle; who sacrifices his body to fame is like a caged pheasant or wild goose.

14 The true hero hardens his nature and controls his mind; the mock variety makes a show of his talent and flies off his temper.

15 Who likes to insult people through his writings is like a sorceress; who likes to flatter people through his writings is like a fortune-teller.

16 The ancients blamed Heaven for their mishap; the moderns blame the earth—that is why they change the sites of their ancestors' graves.

17 A private garden should have a section of rustic wildness; if it merely dazzles by its sumptuousness, the vulgarity of it suffocates one's breath.

18 No one is safe from flattery, therefore the art of flattery is infinitely various; the crowd of blackmailers is legion, therefore the flow of rumours is difficult to stop.

19 All the universe is an inn; search not specially for a retreat of peace: all the people are your relatives; expect therefore troubles from them.

20 It is most difficult for love to last long, therefore who loves passionately is in the end cured of love; human nature is eternal, therefore who follows his nature in the end retains his original nature.

21 The blessing of health is realized on the sick-bed; the blessing of a peaceful home is realized when that peace is upset.

22 All people are in financial troubles sometimes. The failure to realize the meaning of poverty must be also considered a fault of the wealthy and successful. Moreover, there are heroes among the poor: the right thing is to open your eyes and broaden your chest.

23 Thrift is an aid to integrity; loyalty guides one toward a steady character. (Who lives within his means is not tempted.—*Ed.*)

24 To suffer an insult from those one fears is not true patience; to suffer an insult from those one does not fear is true patience.

25 Who does not enjoy his happy moments cannot after all be called lucky; who feels happy in extremities is the real cultivated scholar.

26 To see through fame and wealth is to gain a little rest; to see through life and death is to gain a big rest.

27 Swim not in the tides of the world, and storms will not beat upon your breast.

28 To be elated at success and disappointed at failure is to be the child of circumstances; how can such a one be called master of himself?

29 Stupidity prevents one from committing mistakes; leisure confers upon one many privileges. (A folk proverb, especially as a guide to officialdom: Do much, err much; do little, err little; do nothing, err nothing. This, however, differs in sense from the maxim which warns against the man with flighty ideas and unsteady purpose.—*Ed.*)

30 Disasters arise from hatred; good luck come from goodness of heart.

31 Accumulate learning as you would accumulate wealth; seek moral goodness as you would seek official rank and honour; love your parents as you would love your wife and children; look after the country well as you would look after your own official post.

32 Who is narrow of vision cannot be big-hearted; who is narrow of spirit cannot take long, easy strides.

33 Who gives me goods hurts my spirit; who gives me fame injures my life.

34 Do not be cool towards a close relative on account of some small quarrel; do not forget an old act of kindness because of a recent dispute.

35 In moments of satisfied conceit, one speaks words of untruth; in moments of heated anger, one speaks words offending courtesy.

36 Be firm in your acts, but easy in your heart; be strict with yourself, but gentle with your fellow men.

37 God gives me bad luck, I meet it with a generous heart. God gives me labour and toil, I meet it with an easy-going mind. God gives me trials and adversities, I understand them by means of Tao (comprehension of the rhythm of life).

38 Some who do not save in times of plenty regret it in times of need; some who do not study in youth regret it on occasions when knowledge is of use; some who talk freely when drunk regret it when they are sober; some who do not give themselves a little rest in the days of their health regret it when they are confined to bed.

39 Who likes to spread secrets should not be told a secret; who loves to criticize affairs cannot be entrusted with affairs.

40 Keep your mind busy to accomplish things; keep your mind open to understand things.



41 If a scholar, being poor, cannot help people with money but will on occasions wake up a man from his folly or save a man from trouble with a word of advice, that is also a form of (religious) merit.

42 The man of real ability shows his ability in his face; the happy man conceals his talents.

43 Humility is a good thing, but over-humility is near to crookedness; silence is a virtue, but undue silence bespeaks a deceitful mind.

44 Who does evil and is afraid of letting it be known has still a seed of good in his evil; who does good and is anxious to have it known has still a root of evil in his good.

45 Who does not have self-respect invites disgrace; who is not on the look-out against himself courts disaster; who is not satisfied with himself will grow; who is not sure of his own correctness will learn many things.

46 One should not miss the flavour of being sick, nor miss the experience of being destitute.

47 Who is indignant at false gossip invites rumour; who is pleased with words of praise attracts the flatterers.

48 By sometimes thinking of the period of illness, one's worldly ambitions becomes milder; by sometimes thinking of death, one's religious thoughts grow.

49 On occasions of a great or difficult crisis, you see a man's stature; on occasions of good luck or mishap, you see a man's great or small mind; in moments of satisfaction or anger, you see a man's degree of moral culture (*hanyang*); in a man's refusal or acceptance of a course of action with or against the crowd, you see a man's sense of judgment.

50 When God wishes to send disaster upon a person, He first sends him a little luck to elate him and see whether he can receive it in a worthy manner; when God wishes to send blessing upon a person, He first sends him a little mishap and sees how well he can take it.

51 Talent grows strong through personal force; character becomes firm through the will.

52 The noisy person cannot have calm judgment; the timid soul cannot have superior sense; the man of inordinate desires cannot do generous deeds; the man of many words cannot have a steady mind; the man of physical prowess cannot have refinement.

53 He who is a good judge of men corrects what he hears by what he sees; he who is not a good judge of men corrupts what he sees by what he hears.

54 The clever man often worries; the loyal person is often overworked.

55 The great hypocrite weeps to make people believe him; women and cowards weep to make people pity them.

56 A girl who flirts with her looks is not chaste; a scholar who flirts with his knowledge is not honest.

57 When a mean person plans to injure a gentleman, his heart is cruel, his plans are well laid out and his action is firm; therefore the gentleman can seldom escape. When a gentleman intends to punish a mean person, his heart is kind, his plans are incomplete, and he cannot quite go to the limit; therefore more often he himself is victimized by it.

58 The amasser of wealth is rich materially and poor in his mind; the contented man is materially poor and rich in his mind.

59 Virtue in a rich person is the ability to give, in a poor man it is the refusal to beg, in a man of high position it is a humble attitude toward fellow men, and in a man of low position it is the ability to see through life.

60 There is never a quarrel that cannot be settled when both parties repent, never a friendship that does not succeed when both parties are attracted toward one another, never a stroke of bad luck that can be avoided when both parties have lost their temper.

61 The braggart is seldom loyal; the glib talker is seldom honest.

62 The proud spirit, the chivalric spirit and the beautiful spirit suffuse fragrance even when their bones are dead; words of cool detachment, witty words and words of charm carry weight though their volume be small.

63 Such is the power of literature: it speaks of joy and makes one dance; it speaks of sorrow and makes one weep; it speaks of retirement and makes one detached; it speaks of love and makes one tender; it speaks of danger and makes one shiver; it speaks of pent-up anger and makes one cautious; it speaks of indignation and makes one lay one's hand on the sword; it speaks of incitement to action and makes one throw down the pen; it speaks of the high and makes one soar up to the clouds; it speaks of the low and makes one roll down the rocks. It shakes our heart and dazzles our eyes, but this has nothing to do with stylistic embellishments.

64 Of the things that are good, only study is good without accompanying evil; the love of mountains and rivers is good without accompanying evil; taking pleasure in the moon, the breeze, flowers and bamboos is good without accompanying evil; sitting in upright posture in silence is good without accompanying evil.

65 Wine dispels sorrow, and the best part is when one is slightly drunk; carefree fancies go into poems, and the best lines are obtained without effort.

66 There are four rules for living in the mountains: let there be no formation in trees, no arrangement of rocks, no sumptuousness in the living house, and no contrivance in the human heart.

67 One should see the flowers' shadow in the water, the bamboos' shadow under the moon, and the beauty's shadow behind a door screen.

68 There must be no straining after effect in the arts of leisure: to go after the fanciful in dress, the exotic in food, and quality in daily utensils is uncleanness in the pursuit of leisure, and the worm of corruption in the pursuit of leisure.

69 To stay up in the mountains is a fine thing, but the slightest attachment turns it into a market; the appreciation of old paintings is a refined hobby, but the slightest greed of possession turns one into a merchant; wine and poetry provide occasions of pleasure, but the slightest loss of freedom turns them into hell; generous hospitality is a magnanimous habit, but when one is surrounded by common fellows, it is again like entering a sea of distress.

70 If a man can keep ten thousand volumes of rare books, have them bound in precious brocade, and perfumed with rare incense, while he himself lives in a mud house with a screen of reed, paper windows and mud walls, and lives all his life in simple cotton dress, that one might be called an extraordinary person on this earth.

71 Hide your expression of personal dislike in the wine cup; conceal your pity for mankind in your poems.

72 The sun and moon shoot past like a bullet in our floating life; only sleep affords a little extension of our span of life. Business affairs fly about like thick dust to belabour our lives; only sleep affords a little reprieve. Gorging oneself with fish and meat morning and night besmirches our taste; only sleep gives opportunity for a short fast. Contention and strife disturb our peace; only sleep restores for us a short Golden Age. As for seeing novel things in our sleep—travelling abroad and being able to walk without legs and fly without wings—it provides us also with a little fairyland.

73 Pass famous mountains as you read rare books, a few steps at a time if you are tired, or going a hundred miles when you are feeling fit. One does not go by a schedule, but only stops at what pleases the eye and delights the mind.

74 To go to see the prune flowers after snow, pay a visit to the chrysanthemums during frost, tend the orchid during rain, or listen to the swaying bamboos before the breeze—such are the joys of leisure of a rustic fellow, but they are also moments of the greatest meaning to the scholar.

75 When the tea is well-brewed and the incense has a pure fragrance, it's a delight if friends drop in; when birds twitter and flowers drop their petals, even solitude is contentment for the soul.

76 You are reading when incense is burning and all your human obligations are fulfilled, while outside the screen the flower petals are dropping and the moon has come up to the top of the pine trees, and you suddenly hear the temple bell and push open the window and see the Milky Way—such a moment is superior to daytime.

77 If a man's house is not secluded, his mind does not wander far; if a man's face does not show a little sadness, his thoughts are not deep.

78 With the door shut and living in idleness, I associate with the musty volumes the year round; meeting an old friend and falling into conversation, we carry on the discussion deep into the night.

79 They say there is a devil in the drunkard and a ghost in the poet; I think these people have perfect mastery of themselves, so that when the spirits move, they give the spirits a free hand.

80 Floating down the stream in spring in a small boat, even the most conventional spirit feels emancipated; listening to the rain at night over a lone wine cup, even the most stouthearted will feel touched.

81 Whither shall we dispose of the pure breeze and shining moon of the universe? Into the wine cup and bag of poetry. How shall we take leave of the changing elements of human passion? By closing the door and lying on a high pillow.

82 Sometimes plant bamboos while there is a drizzling rain; close the gate and tend the flowers in idleness; take up a pen and leisurely check up mistakes in old editions; draw spring water and try several pots of the season's tea.

83 During a drizzling rain, open a volume leisurely; against the breeze, play the string instrument alone.

84 Only watch how the flowers bloom, how the flowers fade; say not this man is right, that man is wrong.

85 Let the red dust of the road and the white foams of the river circle round the southern city; lose not to the bright moon among flowers and the pure breeze among pines a good nap in my northern room.

86 Living in the mountains has eight advantages over living in the city: no strict conventions, no strange visitors, no mulling over wine and meat, no fights over property, no concerns over the treacherous human heart, no quarrels over right and wrong, no pressing for literary articles, no gossip about officials.

87 When the rain is over and the air is cool, when your affairs are few and your mind is at ease, you listen to the lingering notes of some neigh-

bour's flute chasing after the clear clouds and the receding rain, and every note seems to drop and sink into your soul.

88 When wild geese cry in the sky, the mountain clouds touch your tower, and a thousand peaks bid the rain proceed, you approach a couch for an afternoon nap, and even your dreams will partake of poetry.

89 Rather be laughed at by the world, be not fooled by the Creator; rather be disturbed by the gentleman, be not familiar with the petty people.

90 If indeed we can confer wealth and poverty upon ourselves, then God has no control; if our happiness and disappointments depend on what others say of us, then the gossip-makers have their way.

91 Poverty is not a disgrace; disgrace lies in poverty without ambition. A mean position is not a cause for contempt; contempt belongs to one in a mean position without ability. Old age is no cause for regret; regret that one is old, having lived in vain. Death is no cause for sorrow; sorrow that one dies without benefit to the world.

92 So long as I have legs, so long as I have eyes, wherever I go I am the lord of the mountains and rivers and the winds and the breeze.

93 Whenever you do a thing, act so that it will give your friends no occasion for regret and your foes no cause for joy.

94 Some one skill enables one to make a living; too many abilities make one a slave.

95 Poetry is for pleasing the spirit, the wine is for pleasing the soul. If with poetry one becomes jealous of fame, and with wine one falls into a drunken brawl, wherefore doth either please the spirit or the soul?

96 Talk not of arbitrary opinions in your mouth, hang not sorrow on the tip of your eyebrow—this is to be a human fairy. Plant flowers and bamboos where they belong, keep fish and poultry to suit your own pleasure—this is economics of living in the mountains.

97 Look at a beauty as you look at beautiful clouds, and your mortal passions will be milder; listen to the song of flutes as you listen to the flowing water, what harm is there?

98 Money sometimes prevents trouble; too much money breeds it.

99 Stupid sons don't ruin a family; it is the clever ones who do.

100 A hero may be willing to lose the world, but he will not be willing to lose his concubine and his horse.

# The Pronunciation of Chinese Names

- 1 Every vowel in the Romanized spelling of Chinese is pronounced.
- 2 The vowels have as their basis the usual Latin values:

*a* as in *father*  
*e* as in *eight*  
*eh* as in *burr*  
*erh* as in a Scotch *burr*  
*i* as in *machine* and *in*  
*o* as in *old*  
*u* as in *goose*  
*ü* as in German *lügen*

3 The vowel sound in combinations like *tse*, *sze* does not exist in English. It is made with difficulty by Westerners, but is actually the vowel sound produced when the sound of *z* is prolonged and definitely vocalized ("buzzing" sound). In this instance, I depart from the Wade system, which renders it as *tzŭ*, because of its cumbersomeness. It frequently appears in names like *Laotse*, *Chuangtse*, *Tsengtse*, *Tsesze*.

4 The vowel sound indicated by the combination *ih* does not exist in English. It is made when the tongue and lip positions of the English *sh* are held unchanged and vocalized. For practical purposes, read the *ih* as *ee* (or if possible as a sound in between *she* and *shir*); there's no use trying to reproduce the sound exactly.

5 The important diphthongs are: *ia*, *ai*, *ou*, *uo*, *ei*, *ieh*. *ua*—all pronounced with their individual approximate Latin values (*h* in *ieh* is not pronounced). *ao* may be pronounced nearly as *ow* in *owl*.

6 Combinations like *in*, *ing*, *an*, *ang* are pronounced with the usual Latin values for the sounds (*in*, *ing*, *ahn*, *ahng*). But *en*, *eng* are pro-

nounced as *ern*, *erng*, or for practical purposes as *un*, *ung* (*sun*, *sung*) in English, whereas Chinese *un*, *ung* must be pronounced as *oon*, *oong*.

7 The distinction between *sh* and *hs* is a nuisance for English readers: read both as *sh* for practical purposes. Technically, the sound *hs* is different and comes invariably before *i* and *ü*. Since the two groups are clearly separated by the occurrence or absence of a following *i* or *ü*, that distinction in spelling between *sh* and *hs* is totally unnecessary for Chinese readers, and meaningless for Westerners.

8 The Chinese language distinctly differentiates between aspirated and unaspirated *p*, *t*, *k*, *ch*, *ts*. For practical purposes read *p*, *t*, *k*, *ch*, *ts* as *b*, *d*, *g*, *j*, *dz*, and read *p'*, *t'*, *k'*, *ch'*, *ts'* like the regular English *p*, *t*, *k*, *ch*, *ts*.

9 Remember therefore to follow the Latin values for the vowels as a general principle, and for practical purposes read:

<i>hs</i> as <i>sh</i>	<i>eh</i> as <i>er</i>
<i>ih</i> as <i>ee</i> (or <i>ir</i> )	<i>en</i> as <i>un</i>
<i>teh</i> as <i>y-ay</i>	<i>eng</i> as <i>ung</i>

10 In particular, the closest pronunciation for the following words is as indicated below:

Tao [*tow*] as in *towel*  
 Laotse [*louts*i] *lou* as in *loud*  
 Chuangtse [*jwahng*-tsi]  
 Lichtse [*lee-ay*-tsi]

# TABLE OF CHINESE DYNASTIES

NAME	DATES	CENTURIES (approximate)	REMARKS
(Mythical)	2697-2206 B.C.	XXVII-XXIII	Legendary
Hsia	2205-1784 B.C.	XXII-XIX	} Together with Chou, called "Santai" or "Three Dynasties"
Shang (Yin)	1783-1123 B.C.	XVIII-XII	
Chou	1122-222 B.C.	XI-III	Classic period, Ch'un-ch'iu period 722-481 Chankuo period 403-221
Ch'in	221-207 B.C.	end of III	Reunified China
Han	206 B.C.- A.D. 219	II B.C.-A.D. II	"Eastern Han" from A.D. 25
Wei	220-264	middle III	Wei, Wu and Shu forming the "Three Kingdoms" from about A.D. 200
Chin	265-419	mid. III-IV	"Eastern Chin" from 317. Bar- barians' kingdoms in North China 304-439
"North and South"		} V-VI	} These are called "North and South" Dynasties for distinc- tion Together with preceding Wu and Eastern Chin, called "Six Dynasties," a term re- ferring to southern culture.
Sung	420-478		
Ch'i	479-501		
Liang	502-556		
Ch'en	557-588		
Sui	589-617	round A.D. 600	Reunified China
T'ang	618-906	VII-IX	
"Wutai"		} first half X	} These are called "Wutai," or "Five Dynasties" for distinction from other dynasties of the same name
Liang	907-922		
T'ang	923-935		
Chin	936-946		
Han	947-950		
Chou	951-959		
Sung	960-1276	latter half X- XIII	"Southern Sung" from 1127 onward, with Northern China under Manchus and Mongols
Yüan (Mongol)	1277-1367	end of XIII- mid XIV	Foreign rule
Ming	1368-1643	mid. XIV-mid. XVII	Restored to Chinese rule
Ch'ing (Manchu) Republic	1644-1911 1911-	mid. XVII-XIX XX	Foreign rule



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